

O&R: CLEAR AWAY SNOW, ICE TO KEEP GAS SERVICE SAFE

PEARL RIVER, NY Jan. 5, 2018 --- In the aftermath of Thursday's snow storm, O&R urges its customers to take an extra minute for safety's sake to clear snow and ice away from the equipment that delivers natural gas to their homes and businesses.

O&R asks customers to carefully clear snow and ice away from the natural gas regulator and meter as well as any outdoor vents associated with gas equipment. If possible, use a broom instead of a shovel to minimize the chance of damaging the piping. Keeping the equipment and vents clear of ice allow for safe delivery of natural gas.

Natural gas is clean, safe energy that keeps buildings warm and comfortable. But, if the outside equipment that regulates the natural gas flow into these buildings becomes clogged with snow or caked with ice, the effectiveness of that equipment could be impaired and have serious consequences. If building meters and regulators become covered completely with ice, customers should immediately call O&R to free the equipment as encasement in ice can create a dangerous situation. The call is part of the service O&R provides and is at no cost to the customer.

In addition, it is very important that fuel burning appliances are vented to the outdoors where the products of combustion can be safely expelled after the gas has been burned. Blocked appliance intake and exhaust vents can cause accumulation of dangerous carbon monoxide fumes in buildings.

Carbon monoxide detectors are a useful product in alerting when carbon monoxide is accidentally being produced by appliances and escaping into the inside of the house. But, the very best prevention is to be sure all appliances are operating correctly, vent pipes are in place and exhaust is freely flowing up the chimney flue to the outdoors.

O&R also warns that snowplowing and snow dumping operations close to the natural gas equipment increase the risk of damage. O&R urges snow removal operations to dump and pile plowed snow away from O&R natural gas equipment.

If you smell natural gas, leave the area immediately and, from a safe location, call O&R's Gas Emergency Hotline 1-800-533-5325. Also, call if you suspect that natural gas equipment has been damaged or that a natural gas appliance is malfunctioning.

And, no matter what fuel you burn in your heating appliances --- and your fireplace --- if you have flu-like symptoms or headaches that only happen when you are in your home, immediately seek medical attention and have your appliances and chimney checked for proper venting of products of combustion as those symptoms could be signs of carbon monoxide poisoning.