

# News Release

**For Release:**  
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## **Columbia Gas of Virginia Reminds Customers to Clear Natural Gas Meters of Snow and Ice**

Chester, VA – Feb. 4, 2010 – The forecast for significant additional snow this weekend is prompting Columbia Gas of Virginia to remind customers to keep their natural gas meter and venting free from snow and ice.

The outdoor natural gas meter and equipment are designed to withstand winter weather conditions. The concern is that heavy or hard-packed snow and ice, icicles falling from building eaves, or water dripping from a roof and freezing on your natural gas meter venting, could present a condition that temporarily stops the flow of natural gas or create a potential safety hazard.

To help avoid these types of problems, customers are urged to follow some basic tips:

- Please keep your natural gas meter clear of ice and snow.
- Make sure your natural gas meter is visible at all times and accessible for maintenance and emergency responders (i.e. Columbia Gas of Virginia service personnel, meter readers and emergency responders).
- Keep natural gas vents unobstructed and free of debris
  - Some direct vent and high efficiency appliances have side wall vents and air intakes that could become obstructed during heavy snow fall.
- NEVER kick or hit your natural gas meter or its piping with a hammer to break away built-up snow or ice. Remove the snow or ice with your hands.

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Keep Natural Gas Meters Clear

- If you smell the odor of natural gas inside, please leave immediately
  - Call Columbia Gas of Virginia at **1.800.544.5606**, from a nearby safe location.
  - Stay nearby until a gas company representative arrives, or leave a note on you door stating where you can be reached.
  - If you suspect natural gas, do not use matches, electric switches or any kind of appliances or motorized tools.
- If you should smell natural gas outside your home or business, please immediately leave the area and from a safe distance dial **911** and Columbia Gas of Virginia at **1.800.544.5606**.
- Do not dig around a natural gas meter without first calling 811 to have your underground utilities located.

Columbia Gas of Virginia, with headquarters in Chesterfield County, is one of the 9 energy distribution companies of NiSource Inc. (NYSE: NI). Columbia Gas of Virginia serves nearly 240,000 customers in portions of Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, suburban Richmond, Central Virginia, and the Shenandoah Valley, the Lynchburg region and parts of Western Virginia. NiSource distribution companies serve 3.8 million gas and electric customers primarily in nine states. More information about Columbia Gas of Virginia is available on the World Wide Web at [www.columbiagasva.com](http://www.columbiagasva.com).

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