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TIP OF THE WEEK

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NATURAL GAS SAFETY

Natural gas powers a wide array of home and industrial appliances. In urban areas, natural gas is piped directly into your home in much the same way water and electricity are. As with any plumbing system, leaks can sometimes happen.

Because natural gas can displace the air in a confined space, it can cause headaches, nausea, or even lead to suffocation. Natural gas is odorless, colorless, and extremely flammable. It is due to these hazards that gas companies add a chemical called mercaptan (methanethiol) to make natural gas smell like rotten eggs. If you hear or smell a natural gas leak, there are some steps you should take:

- Do not use your cell phone, telephone, or other electronic devices.
- Do not light matches, smoke cigarettes, or generate any sparks.
- Do not operate any electrical switches (even turning lights off could create a spark inside the switch).
- Evacuate everyone from the area.
- Call 911 from a phone away from the leak.
- Contact your natural gas provider.
- If you smell natural gas, it's always safest to leave the area immediately and call the gas company. However, after a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, it could be several days before they are able to reach your home. **DO NOT** turn off your natural gas service unless you smell gas, hear the sound of gas escaping, or see other signs of a leak. **ONLY** turn off your gas if it is safe to do so.

Always have an emergency plan in place and ensure the members of your household are aware of it. For additional safety information, contact your service provider or visit their website.

For more information and tips, visit our website at www.lincolncountysheriff.net and Like us on Facebook at Lincoln County Sheriff's Office – Oregon.