



Safely Operating Around  
Natural Gas Pipelines

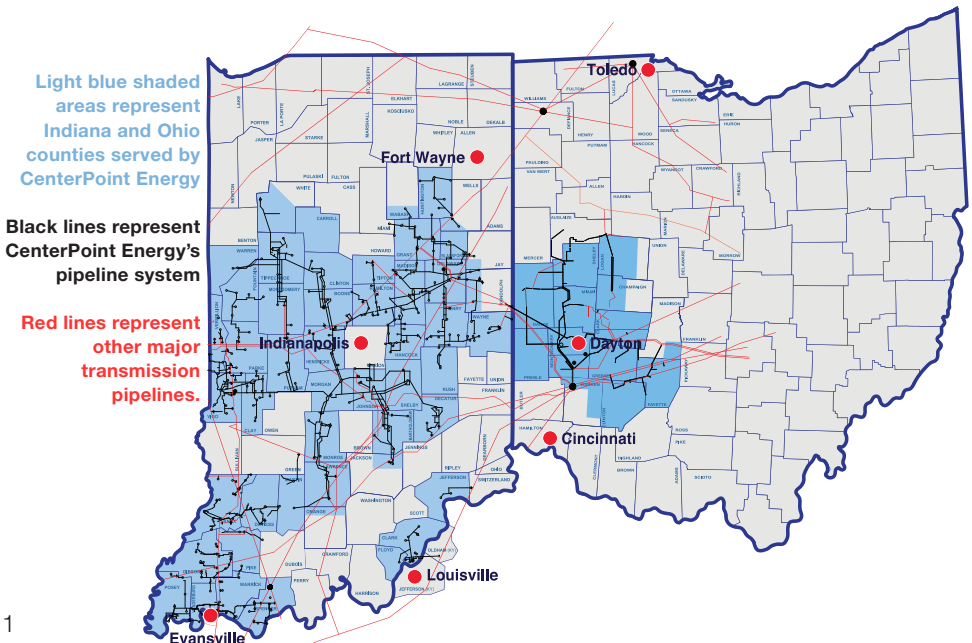


# About this Guide

With more than 22,000 miles of pipeline infrastructure in Indiana and Ohio, CenterPoint Energy has a number of rights-of-way and easements. This guide is intended for use by city and county planners, engineers, developers, land surveyors and residential property owners. If CenterPoint Energy is included in the initial planning stages of land development, project delays can be avoided and safe development in the vicinity of pipelines can be attained. Use this guide as a reference:

1. to educate about CenterPoint Energy's guidelines for property improvements
2. to provide valuable pipeline safety information
  - what to do in an emergency
  - signs of a natural gas leak
  - the "Call Before You Dig" process
  - identifying pipeline markers

Please become familiar with the contents of this guide. Contact CenterPoint Energy at 1-800-227-1376 with any questions or if assistance is needed.



# What is Right-of-Way?

A right-of-way is a strip of land where some of the property owner's legal rights have been granted to a utility company. A right-of-way agreement between a company and a property owner is also called an easement and is usually filed in public records with property deeds. The right-of-way or easement enables a utility company to operate, inspect, repair, maintain or replace a pipeline on property owned by others.

CenterPoint Energy's rights-of-way vary in width from 10 to 100 feet, depending on the number and diameter of the pipeline(s), terrain and terms of the original agreement. Rights-of-way must always be kept free of structures and other physical obstructions. Landowners/tenants should not plant trees on a right-of-way.

- Always call 811 to alert your state's local One Call Center before digging on or near the right-of-way so underground utilities can be located and marked.
- Do not store or place anything on the right-of-way without first having company personnel locate the pipeline, mark the right-of-way location and explain the property development guidelines to you.

# Right-of-Way Clearing for Public Safety

CenterPoint Energy periodically clears rights-of-way for public safety purposes and to comply with federal law. This mainly consists of vegetation management such as mowing, tree trimming and ground clearing, which allows for:

- **Emergency Response Access**  
Clear access to the pipeline allows for prompt response in the event of an emergency.
- **Corrosion Protection**  
Tree roots can wrap around a pipeline, damaging the protective coating of the pipeline.
- **Routine Maintenance Access**  
Clear access to the pipeline is critical to completing required maintenance in a safe, efficient and effective manner.
- **Third-Party Damage Prevention**  
A clear pathway provides a visual corridor so the pipeline can be defended from unauthorized excavation and development.
- **Aerial Surveillance**  
Routine aerial patrols are used to detect threatening excavation activities or leakage along the pipeline.

# What is Encroachment?

An encroachment, generally speaking, is anything that is placed into a right-of-way contrary to the terms of the easement. Typically, CenterPoint Energy allows the property owner to use the easement area within certain guidelines. These guidelines generally allow the property owner to continue with any agricultural, recreational or other activities that pose no problem or threat to the long-term integrity of the pipeline.

## **Examples of encroachment activities that are not acceptable may include, but are not limited to:**

- Permanent facilities associated with adjacent commercial or residential developments
- Planting trees or other landscaping
- Swimming pools
- Patios
- Sprinkler systems
- Street or road crossings
- Heavy equipment crossings
- Utility crossings
- Increasing or decreasing the amount of soil coverage
- Blasting or use of explosives in the vicinity of CenterPoint Energy facilities

To ensure that what you are proposing to build or construct on your property is not within the easement and assures the integrity of the pipeline, contact CenterPoint Energy at 1-800-227-1376.

# General Guidelines to Keep Right-of-Way Clear

## Driveways or Roads

May be permitted to cross and parallel CenterPoint Energy pipeline(s) or infrastructure. Remaining ground cover (dirt, rocks, etc.) over the pipeline(s) must be at least 48 inches and should cross at as close to 90 degrees as possible.

## Landscaping

No bushes, shrubbery or other plants associated with landscaping should be planted within a private easement that would interfere with access to company infrastructure. Small bushes and shrubbery with a mature height no greater than 4 feet may be planted within the easement if planted greater than 10 feet from the pipeline.

## Fencing

Fences are permitted as long as they do not cause an operation or maintenance problem, interfere with walking surveys or shield any section of the right-of-way from visual inspection. Unlocked gates and/or double locked gates are required to allow access to the right-of-way.

## Drainage

Open ditches are discouraged. A ditch crossing will be at near right angles with at least 36 inches of ground cover (48 inches of cover for a transmission pipeline) at the lowest point of the ditch. Drainage tile crossing of pipelines is permitted. It must be continuous from 15 feet either side of the centerline of the pipeline, and a minimum of 18 inches must be maintained between the proposed drainage tile and the pipeline.

## Septic systems

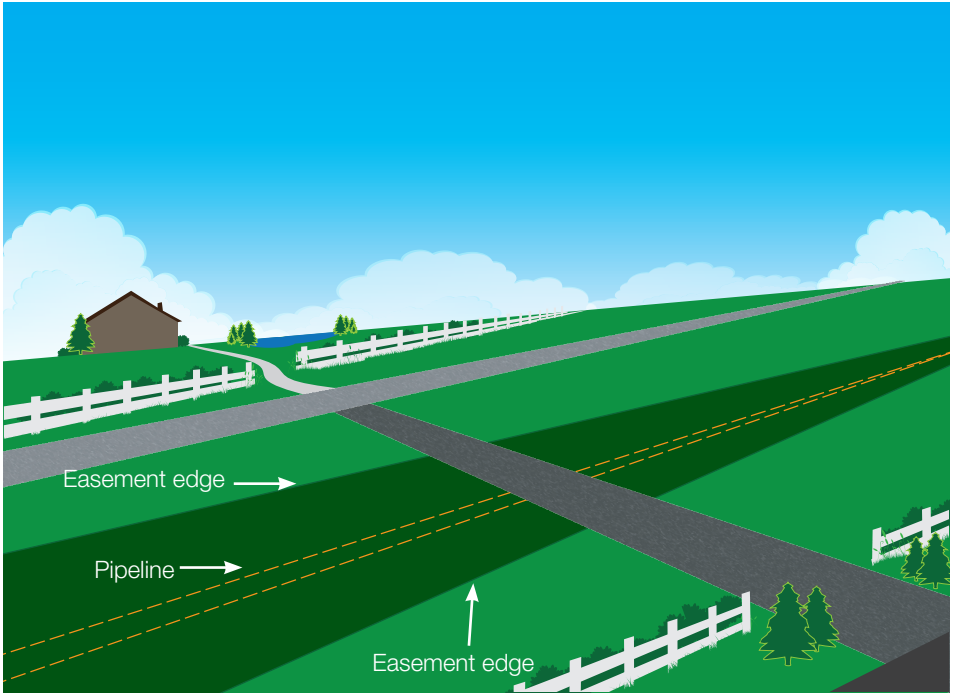
All sewer lines, septic lines or finger systems crossing a pipeline must be made of solid impervious material across the entire easement. A solid septic line or sewer line can be placed no closer to the pipeline than 2 feet vertically crossing the pipeline or 7 feet horizontally paralleling the pipeline. Leach beds are not allowed to be placed in the easement. Mound-type septic systems are also not allowed.

## Permanent structures

Any building or other installation that is permanent in nature and cannot readily be removed or relocated is considered a structure and may not be located in the easement.

\*Landowners may have different right-of-way clearances, based on the original agreement with CenterPoint Energy. Always refer to your specific agreement for exact measures.

# Easement Quick Reference



## Must remain outside easement:

- All structures
- Ponds
- Septic systems
- Trees and shrubs

## Allowed within easement, prior approval required:

- Driveways and roads
- Fence
- Utilities
- Drain tiles

# Damage to a Pipeline

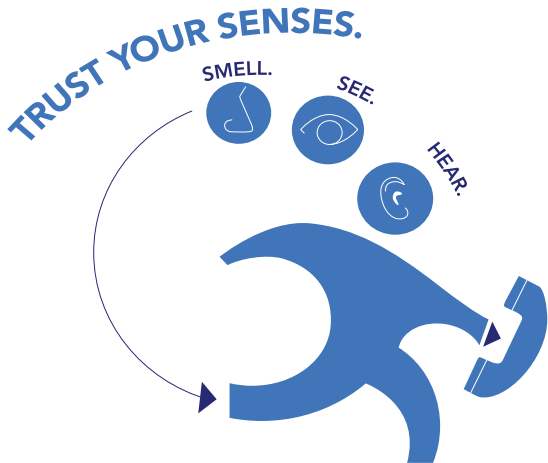
Any damage to a pipeline, regardless of the severity, should be reported to the pipeline company immediately. Even what appears to be a slight scrape or dent may lead to future problems. The pipeline operator will inspect and repair any damage to the line or coating of the line. If it is a CenterPoint Energy pipeline, call 1-800-227-1376 and report the location.

## Signs of a Natural Gas Leak

**SMELL** – a rotten egg or sulfur odor

**SEE** – blowing dirt, bubbling water or dead vegetation

**HEAR** – a hissing or roaring sound



## If a Natural Gas Leak is Suspected

- Leave the area immediately
- Keep all possible ignition sources away from the area (starting an engine, sparks, open flame, etc.)
- Call CenterPoint Energy at 1-800-227-1376
- Call 911 or local emergency response number
- Do not return to the area until CenterPoint Energy tells you it is safe





## Pipeline Markers

The use of pipeline markers is required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to indicate the approximate location of underground pipelines. These markers are usually located at road, railroad and navigable waterway crossings. The markers are approximate and do not indicate the depth of the pipeline. They do include the material transported in the line, name of the pipeline operator and toll-free emergency phone number.

### DAMAGING OR REMOVING MARKER

Causing damage to or removing a pipeline marker is a federal offense subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 and/or up to one year in prison.

If a marker is damaged or in need of repair or relocation, contact CenterPoint Energy at 1-800-227-1376.

# Call Before You Dig









Before any digging or earth moving, whether by a homeowner or a professional excavator or contractor, state law requires calling 811 to notify the local One Call Center at least 48 hours or two full business days prior to the scheduled excavation.

## Provide the 811 operator with the following information:

- County, city or township
- Digging location (street address and nearest cross street)
- Type and extent of work
- Digging start date and time

## After calling 811:

1. The One Call Center will contact the appropriate utility companies, and a trained technician will mark the location of underground facilities with colored flags, stakes or paint at no cost to you.

	Red – Electric
	Yellow – Gas, oil or steam
	Blue – Water
	Orange – Telephone – CATV
	Green – Sewer
	Purple – Reclaimed water
	Pink – Temporary survey markings
	White – Proposed construction

2. Wait two full business days before beginning the digging.
3. Do not remove the flags, stakes or paint marks until you have finished digging.
4. Once the property is marked, dig responsibly and respect the marks. Regardless of depth, always hand dig within 24 inches on either side of a marked utility line.

# ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG



**One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.**

**Safe Digging Is No Accident:  
Always Call 811 Before You Dig**

**Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig.  
Visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) for more information.**

In case of a pipeline emergency,  
call CenterPoint Energy at 1-800-227-1376.



Call 811 before you dig or State One Call Centers



1-800-382-5544



1-800-362-2764



1-800-752-6007

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