

# Before you dig

Stay safe when you are digging – on private and public property. Be aware of your responsibilities. If you are doing the work, then you are responsible for obtaining the plans.

## Who needs to read this

If you are going to be working on a property or in public land, you need to check the location of underground gas services, power, water and telecommunication cables and pipes. This information sheet is aimed at people who are likely to encounter gas services. Including:

- homeowners putting in a new or replacement fence
- contractors installing a new cable or pipe
- maintenance on existing underground assets.

## Rockgas Emergency Contractors

**Christchurch** **0800 501 101**

**Queenstown, Arrowtown, Cromwell** **03 441 8178**

**Southern Lakes – Wanaka** **03 443 4211**  
AFTER HOURS **021 919 631**

## Before you start

Rockgas operates around 470km of LPG networks in Christchurch, Queenstown and the Southern Lakes region.

If you are planning to dig, you need to identify the hazards, assess the risks, and think about the controls you need to put in place.

- Do a physical inspection of the site.
- Request plans from Rockgas by emailing [gasplans@rockgas.co.nz](mailto:gasplans@rockgas.co.nz).
- Do this even if you think you remember where the gas mains are.
- Access plans yourself from <https://asbuilt.rockgas.co.nz>. You will need to set up an account.

**Note:** The BeforeUDig web site will tell you if there are gas services in the area. However it will only refer you to Rockgas and will not send you Rockgas plans.

## Working safely around gas mains

- Pothole for gas pipelines when working within one metre of the indicated position to physically locate the gas main.
- Never use a mechanical excavator or drilling machine within 500mm of the located gas main.
- Follow the WorkSafe Excavation Safety Good Practice Guideline.

## If you unexpectedly come across yellow pipe

If you unexpectedly find yellow or yellow striped pipe or yellow warning tape when you are excavating, it is most likely LPG mains.

Stop excavating immediately and ring **0800 ROCKGAS (0800 7625 427)** for advice.

## If you damage a gas main

Dig-ups are an uncontrolled loss of containment. This creates a very unsafe environment for those carrying out the work and the surrounding public. It will also lead to a loss of supply for our customers and disruption to the public due to the resulting emergency management.

1. Immediately turn off equipment and move away from the gas leak. Don't use your cellphone in the immediate area.
2. Determine the wind direction and remain up wind of the damaged pipe.
3. Cordon off the area, at least 20m for a minor gas leak, 50m from a larger leak.
4. Once you are in a safe area, call 111 or the Rockgas Emergency Contractor – see the blue panel above.



## Properties of LPG

- The gas in the mains is LPG vapour. It is highly flammable and a gas cloud can cause suffocation.
- LPG vapour is twice as heavy as air, so in still air it flows to low points such as trenches and drains.
- The flammability range of LPG is 2% - 10% in air. Outside this range is it either too lean or too rich to burn.
- The smell of LPG is a chemical added so that it can be detected easily. If you smell gas, move away.