TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-GAS · Gas Mains and Gas Leaks Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: Workers and supervisors in buildings with gas supplies, and anyone who digs, trenches or drills near underground services · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026

For anyone who works near gas supplies or digs near gas mains: what gas smells like, no switches or flames, getting out, calling the gas emergency line, and locating gas mains before you dig.

Natural gas and LPG power heaters, ovens, hot water and plant in kitchens, factories, schools, offices and homes, and run underground in mains and service pipes beside roads, footpaths and buildings. A leak can cause a fire or an explosion, and a strike on a gas main while digging can release a large amount of gas in seconds. Gas supplies usually have a smell added so leaks can be noticed.

This talk covers what a gas leak smells and sounds like, what to do when you smell gas (no switches, phones or flames, open up if it is safe, get everyone out, and call the gas emergency line from a safe distance), and how to dig safely near gas mains: find out what is underground before you dig, locate it by hand or non-destructive digging, and what to do if a main is struck. It is awareness, not gas fitting, which is licensed work, or excavation training.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain why gas leaks are dangerous: fire, explosion, and gas collecting in enclosed or low places
- Recognise a gas leak: the added smell, a hissing sound, and bubbling or dying plants above a buried pipe
- Respond to a gas smell: no switches, phones or flames, open up if safe, and get everyone out
- Call the gas emergency line from a safe distance, and the emergency number for a fire or an injury
- Find out what is underground before digging, and locate gas mains by hand or non-destructive digging
- Respond to a gas main strike: stop work, do not try to stop the leak, move everyone away, and call for help

What it covers

Module	Covers
Why it matters	How a gas leak becomes a fire or explosion; Recognising a leak; Who can work on gas
If you smell gas	No switches, phones or flames; Get everyone out; Call the gas emergency line
Digging near gas mains	Find out before you dig; Locate it, then dig; If you strike a main

Activities

- Spot the risk: workers look at four situations, from a gas smell in a plant room to an excavator working near a marked main, and decide what is wrong

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- What would you do: workers decide what to do in four situations, from a gas smell when they unlock the kitchen to a hissing pipe at the bottom of a trench

What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

Questions

Does it give us the gas emergency number to call? It gives a place to write it in. The gas emergency line differs by gas distributor and by place, and is usually shown on the gas meter, the gas bill or the distributor's website, so the talk asks you to add yours before the session. For a fire, an explosion or anyone hurt, call the emergency number as well.

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

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TOOLBOX TALK

Gas Mains and Gas Leaks Awareness

Smell it, stop, get out: gas leaks in buildings and digging near gas mains

20–30 minutes · Workers and supervisors in buildings with gas supplies, and anyone who digs, trenches or drills near underground services

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

GAS

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ Recognising a gas leak
- ✓ What to do if you smell gas
- ✓ Digging near gas mains
- ✓ What to do if a main is struck

This talk is not

- ✗ Gas fitting, which is licensed work
- ✗ Excavation or plant training
- ✗ Service locating training
- ✗ Our procedure: **[Our excavation procedure]**

Awareness only. Only licensed gas fitters work on gas pipes and appliances.

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Why gas leaks are dangerous

Leaked gas mixed with air can catch fire or explode with one spark.

- Natural gas and LPG are both flammable
- Natural gas rises; LPG sinks and pools low
- A spark from a switch, phone or engine can ignite it
- A smell is added so you can notice a leak
- In large amounts, gas can also push out the air

A composite example

- A cook arrives early, smells gas in the kitchen, and flicks on the lights to find the leak.
- Nothing happens this time. The gas fitter later finds a failed fitting behind the oven.

Smell gas? Do not switch anything on or off.

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Duties under health and safety laws

The business must

- Keep gas installations safe
- Use licensed gas fitters only
- Find services before digging
- Have an emergency plan

You must

- Never work on gas unless licensed
- Follow the dig permit and procedure
- Act on a gas smell straight away
- Report smells, strikes and near misses

Most health and safety laws give these duties. Check the law where you work (in Australia, WHS or OHS laws).

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The order of controls for digging near gas mains

1 **Elimination** Design or move the work away from gas mains

2 **Substitution** Non-destructive digging or boring instead of a bucket

3 **Isolation** Exclusion zones; the distributor isolates or protects the main

4 **Engineering** Services located, marked and exposed before machine digging

5 **Administrative** Current plans, dig permits, spotters, the distributor's rules

6 **PPE** Standard PPE; it will not protect you from a gas fire

HIGHER ORDER

Higher order controls remove or control the hazard at the source, or put a barrier between people and the hazard.

LOWER ORDER

Lower order controls rely on people to do a thing or wear a thing, every time, tired, distracted or rushed.

Behaviours are not on the hierarchy, but behaviours and culture decide whether every control on it actually works.

A plan on paper is not a located service.

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Gas Mains and Gas Leaks Awareness

Participant handout · keep this

Gas leaks cause fires and explosions. Know what to do, and find gas mains before you dig. Keep this page.

If you smell gas

1. No switches, phones, flames or engines
2. Open doors and windows if safe
3. Turn off at the meter only if safe and you know how
4. Get everyone out, well away
5. Call the gas emergency line from a safe place
6. Call your local emergency number (000 in Australia) for fire or injury

Signs of a leak

- The added smell; hissing near a pipe
- Bubbles, dying plants, blowing soil

Never

- Look for a leak with a flame or torch
- Try to stop a leak from a struck main

Be ready

- ☐ Do I know what gas smells like, and where the meter is?
- ☐ Do I know the gas emergency line and our address?
- ☐ Digging? Do I have the service plans, and are they current?
- ☐ Have the services been located and exposed by hand?
- ☐ Do I know what to do if a pipe is struck?

Struck a gas pipe

- Stop; do not try to stop the leak
- Move everyone away; no sparks; call

Who and where

- **[Gas emergency line]**
- **[Who to report to here]**

Smell gas? No switches, no flames, get out, call from a safe place.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It is not gas fitting, excavation, plant or service locating training.

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