



# Controlling Utilities in a Disaster

After a disaster where utilities have been disrupted, there may be a need to turn off certain utilities in order to control additional damage from the disaster. This usually involves turning off one or more of the following; Natural Gas, Water and Electricity. Emergency service providers and Utility employees will be overwhelmed following the disaster, so it's important that your family and your neighbors know how and where to control the utilities. Pre-planning and fast actions can save both lives and property.

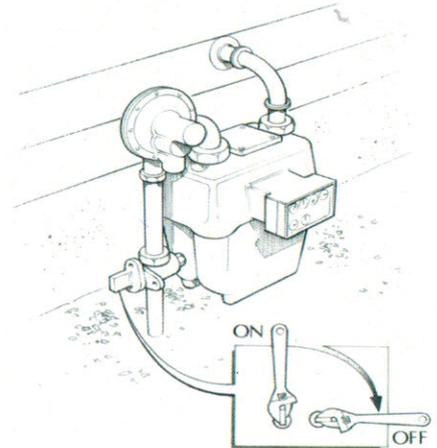
## Emergency Gas Shut Off

In case of an earthquake or other emergency, everyone in your family should know where your gas meter is and how to turn off the gas. Most meters are at the front or side of the house. Some are put inside a building. In apartments or commercial buildings, they might be in the back.

**If an emergency arises and you don't smell or hear gas escaping, you probably don't need to shut off gas service.**

But if you do smell or hear gas: Locate the meter shut-off valve. It's usually the first fitting on the gas supply pipe coming out of the ground near your meter.

- Use a long-handled wrench to give the valve one-quarter turn in either direction so that the lever is crosswise to the pipe. Once the gas is off, leave it off. Contact Puget Sound Energy (or your local gas company) to inspect the system, check and relight appliances.



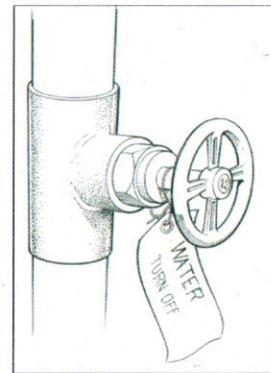
## Water Shut Off

Water quickly becomes a precious resource following many disasters. It is vital that all household members learn how to shut off the water at the main house valve.

- Cracked lines may pollute the water supply to your house. It is wise to shut off your water until you hear from the authorities that it is safe for drinking.
- The effects of gravity may drain the water in your hot water and toilet tanks unless you trap it in your house by shutting off the main house valve (not the street valve in the cement box at the curb – this valve is extremely difficult to turn and requires a special tool).

### Preparing to shut off water

- Locate the shut-off valve for the water line that enters your house. It may look like this:
- Make sure this valve can be completely shut off. Your valve may be rusted open, or it may only partially close. Replace it if necessary.
- Label this valve with a tag for easy identification, and make sure all household members know where it is located.



## Electrical Shut Off

Electrical sparks have the potential of igniting natural gas if it is leaking. It is wise to teach all responsible household members where and how to shut off the electricity.

### Preparing to shut off electricity

- Locate your electricity circuit box.
- Teach all responsible household members how to shut off the electricity to the entire house.

**FOR YOUR SAFETY: Always shut off all the individual circuits before shutting off the main circuit breaker.**

