

Natural Gas Checklist

A calm record of odors, flame concerns, and symptoms that shift with appliance use.

Print this page to add a Natural Gas Checklist to your Tracking Symptom Binder — note conditions when each odor event occurs — rain, wind, and temperature often follow the pattern.

WHAT IT IS

Methane, mercaptan, and slow leak pathways

Natural gas is primarily methane plus a sulfur additive called mercaptan that creates the familiar smell. But mercaptan dissipates over time — especially when gas migrates through soil — so a chronic outdoor or subsurface leak can produce little to no noticeable odor indoors, even as trace VOCs accumulate.

SIGNS WORTH NOTICING

Intermittent smell, flame color, and utility changes

A sulfur or rotten egg odor that comes and goes — near appliances, after rain, or at night — is the most recognizable sign. A weak or discolored flame, symptoms that worsen near gas appliances, or a gradual unexplained rise in the gas bill are all worth noting.

WHY IT GETS MISSED

Sub-threshold leaks and odor that fades

Standard gas detectors alarm near the lower explosive limit — far above the concentrations associated with chronic exposure. Buried lines can leak into soil, where the odorant disperses before gas enters the home. Symptoms like headaches, dizziness, and throat irritation are common and rarely connected to a gas source without a specific odor complaint.

WHAT TO NOTICE

Where, when, and what else is happening

Observe whether odors appear in specific rooms, near certain appliances, or outdoors near the meter or utility lines. Note whether symptoms shift after appliance use, after rain, or in cold weather. A log of these moments builds the pattern a utility inspector or consultant needs.

DATE CHECKED _____ AREAS COVERED _____

Check anything you notice. This is a record of observations, not conclusions — there are no wrong answers.

01 Odors & environment

- Sulfur or rotten egg smell — indoors, near appliances, or outside near the meter
Faint sulfur smell near the basement utility closet — more noticeable after rain.
- Utility markings or recent utility work near the property
- Dead or discolored patches of grass or vegetation near buried gas lines

02 Appliance & equipment observations

- Weak or discolored flame on any gas burner or appliance
- Flexible gas connectors, shutoff valves, or appliance fittings that appear aged or corroded

03 Symptom patterns

- Head pressure, dizziness, or throat irritation near gas appliances or utility areas
- Symptoms that worsen in cold or wet weather and ease in warm, dry periods
- Unexplained gradual increase in monthly gas bill

OBSERVATIONS

LOCATIONS AND CONDITIONS WHEN ODOR WAS NOTICED

SYMPTOM TIMING RELATIVE TO WEATHER OR APPLIANCE USE

NOTES

A checklist is a snapshot. The patterns that matter most tend to appear when you compare one across weeks, seasons, and rooms.