



## Safety Flash

### Near Miss/Lessons Learned

**Incident:** GEM plumbers, working on an RLI project, received a sign-off from Columbia Gas that the house gas lines held pressure. Columbia Gas then turned on gas service to the building.

The next day, another Columbia Gas employee who inspects new gas services notified RLI that they had to shut off the gas because they were not detecting any odor. If a leak had occurred in the building, no one could smell the gas and may have suspected that it was only compressed air – with potentially catastrophic results.

The Columbia Gas contractor that installed the new steel main line had not pickled the line. Pickling involves running the gas through the line and venting it into the atmosphere until the steel pipe is saturated with the odorant that is put into the gas for detection. Gas is ready to be turned on in buildings when the gas odor is detected at the connection point of the house lines.

The Columbia Gas contractor installed a tap in the line and then introduced extra odorant to pickle the line faster. The next day, the pickling process was complete and gas service was restored to the building.

#### **The lessons learned:**

- Steel pipes absorb the odorant added to natural gas; therefore the line must be “pickled” to saturate the pipe so it no longer will absorb the odorant.
- If steel gas lines are installed on your project, ask if the lines have been pickled before allowing the gas to be turned on.

#### **Keep improving**

Your health and safety are our core value on every project. If you see a way we can support you in keeping our job sites safe, see your supervisor or contact: Jim Philo, 419/654-2043; Rich Franklin, Michigan, 734/679-7283; Alan Doane, Cleveland, 440/429-0639; Rick Wallace, Lima, 419/705-9170 or Mark Hoffman, 419/360-9280.