

# Safety gets the right of way

Your guide to staying safe when  
working around a pipeline  
right of way



**Safety.**

We've got our best  
people on it.



**FORTIS BC™**

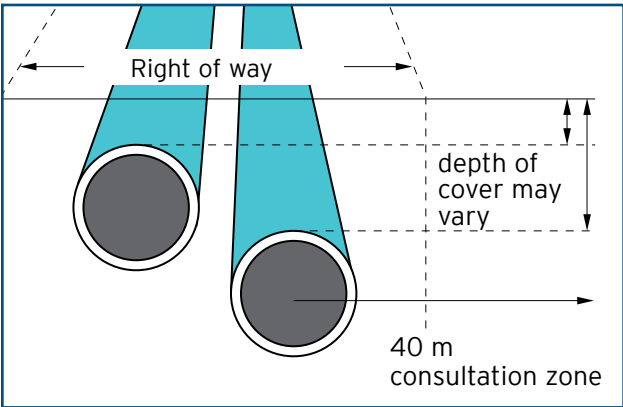
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## What is a FortisBC right of way?

FortisBC acquires certain rights from landowners (including private property owners, First Nations and the provincial and federal Crown) to install, replace, maintain and access works related to our natural gas transmission system. These pipeline corridors, referred to as rights of way (ROW) are legally defined corridors of land, typically 18 metres wide. Landowners retain rights to use ROW areas for activities that do not threaten or interfere with FortisBC facilities, or otherwise interfere with the rights granted to FortisBC.

In addition, new regulations under B.C. Oil and Gas Activities Act require anyone who intends to undertake construction activities within 40 m of a pipeline operating above 100 psi (690 kPa) to get written permission from FortisBC.

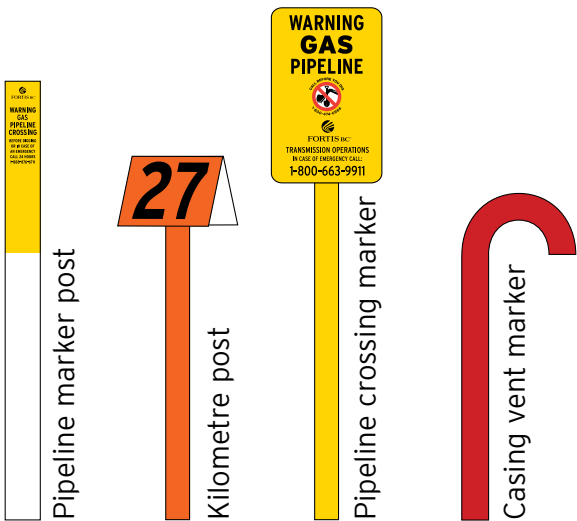


## What is a natural gas transmission pipeline?

FortisBC has more than 3,000 km of transmission pipelines transporting natural gas along rights of way throughout the province of B.C.



These transmission pipelines operate at high pressure, up to a maximum of 2,160 psi (14,893 kPa). The presence of buried pipelines within rights of way is identified with distinctive marker posts and signs, often displaying the *Call before you dig* symbol.



## Call before you dig

The exact location of an underground transmission pipeline must be verified by a FortisBC natural gas representative. Do not rely on the markers for location purposes—they merely identify that a pipeline is in the immediate vicinity. You must phone BC One Call at **1-800-474-6886** before attempting digging, drilling or excavating of any kind. A pipeline inspector must contact the third party on site to verify all construction and excavation/ground disturbance activity within a pipeline ROW, crossing a pipeline or within 40 m of a TP (transmission pressure) pipeline. A pipeline inspector may be present on site to witness the activity.



## Permits: a legal requirement

The Oil and Gas Activities Act provides that approval is needed before beginning work over, along or across a pipeline or right of way. WorkSafe BC Occupational Health & Safety Regulations further provide that FortisBC requirements must be followed when working near our pipelines.

You must obtain:

- Written permission from FortisBC when working within 40 m of a pipeline operating above 100 psi (690 kPa)
- A permit from FortisBC when working:
  - within 10 m of a transmission pressure pipeline
  - within 2 m of an intermediate pressure pipeline
  - within a FortisBC statutory right of way

### Contact us to discuss your plans

Review your plans with us before submitting. These preliminary meetings can save you time and money by clarifying what you can and can't do within a right of way.

## **Apply for your permit ahead of time**

Call us and we will fax you a pipeline and/or right of way works application form or you can download a copy at [fortisbc.com/rightofway](http://fortisbc.com/rightofway). Once your application is received, we will review and respond to it within 15 days; however, depending on the complexity of your situation, some road crossing applications may not be granted approval within the 15 days.

After your application has been approved and before starting any work in the right of way, you must contact FortisBC to schedule an inspection (the contact number is listed on the permit). We require a minimum of three (3) working days notice.

Throughout B.C., FortisBC and BC Hydro share some rights of way. You'll need approval from both companies for any activities within joint rights of way.

## **When must you get a permit?**

**You DON'T NEED a permit, however, you must get prior FortisBC approval for the following activities:**

- planting flower beds, vegetable gardens, lawns, low shrubbery (under 1.8 m at maturity and not planted within 1 m of pipeline) and farming
- livestock grazing

**You DO NEED a permit from FortisBC for any activity within the right of way which involves:**

- increasing or decreasing ground elevation
- temporary or permanent road and driveway crossings and/or movement of vehicles and equipment
- logging roads (temporary or permanent) and/or logging activities
- utilities (underground and overhead)
- ditches, drains, sanitary and storm sewers, irrigation lines, water lines and dikes
- test holes
- fences and posts

- Christmas tree or commercial tree farming
- parking lots
- railways
- parking commercial or recreational vehicles
- sports fields or golf courses (subject to limits on regrading landscaping, irrigation lines, paving or structures such as goalposts and backstops)
- trails
- blasting in the vicinity of a pipeline
- preloading adjacent to right of way
- stockpiling material adjacent to right of way

**Note:** some activities may require an engineering assessment prior to permit approval. This may increase the time needed to process your permit.

**WARNING:** Carrying out activities on a FortisBC right of way that are not allowed can endanger people and property. We inspect rights of way regularly. If we observe unauthorized activity, we may report it to WorkSafe BC, the BC Oil & Gas Commission, or the RCMP, which may result in legal action or fines. This list is a guide and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

### **Installations and activities generally NOT allowed within a right of way:**

- buildings, structures or foundations (including garden sheds, patios, concrete slabs, playhouses, swimming pools and satellite dishes)
- overhanging roofs and balconies
- parallel or tapering encroachment by roads or other utilities
- blasting; dumping, stockpiling material or preloading of any kind
- trees (subject to height restriction)
- burning of materials (waste, scrap lumber and slash)
- wells, pits
- pile-driving, poles for power lines and street lighting
- augering or other boreholes

- signs, except for FortisBC's pipeline warning and identification signs
- storage of flammable materials, equipment, and building goods
- commercial garbage disposal containers

To understand what's allowed on a right of way on your property, refer to your registered Statutory Right of Way Agreement. Restrictions mentioned here have been kept generic because they vary between statutory right of way agreements throughout the province.

## Our commitment to safety

The natural gas carried in our pipelines is potentially hazardous, flammable and explosive under certain conditions. Recognizing that the care of both the pipeline and the rights of way cannot be left to chance, we:

- conduct regular aerial, ground and marine inspections of rights of way to check for erosion, stability and unauthorized third-party activity
- monitor encroachment and clear away excessive vegetation
- maintain a permit system for activities within 2 m of an IP pipeline and 10 m of a TP pipeline or within a right of way
- carry out internal pipeline inspections
- ensure 24-hour monitoring of the gas pressure and flow within our pipeline system
- develop emergency preparedness plans in partnership with fire departments, municipalities and provincial agencies
- provide information to the public to help prevent problems and promote safety
- mark pipeline installations with highly visible display signs

**Smell gas? Get out, then call our 24-hour emergency line, toll-free at 1-800-663-9911.**

## Safety around pipelines

### Signs of trouble

Transmission pipeline leaks or other problems are rare, so we are always prepared. Our transmission pipeline system is designed with valves that can shut off the flow of natural gas upstream and downstream from the point of damage.

Notify FortisBC immediately if contact has been made with the pipeline or with its coating. If you see, hear or smell any sign of trouble:

#### Do:

- turn off machinery and eliminate all sources of ignition
- shut off vehicle engines
- call FortisBC immediately at 1-800-663-9911
- evacuate the area including buildings (move people upwind if possible)
- prevent vehicles and bystanders from entering the area
- call the fire department if there is a fire or danger of a fire
- avoid contact with any natural gas escaping from the pipeline
- warn people in nearby buildings where gas might escape through drains if the break or leak is underground

**Also, notify us if you see suspected unauthorized activity on a right of way or pipeline crossing.**

#### Do not:

- turn electrical switches on or off
- operate any machinery, including vehicles
- attempt to make temporary repairs or operate any underground gas valves

## Permit applications and more information

Lower Mainland or Interior:

Local calls      **604-576-7021**  
Fax                **604-592-7658**  
Toll-free         **1-877-599-0996**  
Toll-free fax    **1-877-212-1312**  
Email             **[rightofway@fortisbc.com](mailto:rightofway@fortisbc.com)**

Write to:         FortisBC  
Property Services  
16705 Fraser Highway  
Surrey, B.C. V4N 0E8

Vancouver Island, Texada Island, Sunshine Coast  
Powell River and Whistler:

Toll-free         **1-877-599-0996**  
Fax                **250-388-6876**

Write to:         FortisBC  
Property Services  
320 Garbally Road  
Victoria, B.C. V8T 2K1

**Applications are available  
at [fortisbc.com/rightofway](https://fortisbc.com/rightofway).**

**To learn more about our  
commitment to safety,  
visit [fortisbc.com/safety](https://fortisbc.com/safety).**

To visit our offices, please call ahead to book an appointment.



# Frequently called numbers

## Emergencies

(Gas smell & emergencies  
or pipeline problems)

**1-800-663-9911**

## Customer service

(Information &  
general inquiries)

**1-888-224-2710**

## Call before you dig/BC One Call

(Underground gas  
line information)

**1-800-474-6886**

Cell phone

**\*6886**


FortisBC Permit desk

**1-877-599-0996**

## Report suspicious activity

If you see any suspicious activity within a right of way such as: vandalism, threats, unauthorized persons on site or unauthorized vehicles, call the National Security Information Network at **1-800-420-5805**. In an emergency or if you see an act in progress, call 911 or your local police.

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