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Safety and Compression Couplings in Texas

The Texas Railroad Commission has proposed new mandatory directives to:

1. increase the frequency of inspections for natural gas leaks,
2. shorten natural gas leak repair times and
3. require gas utility companies to seek out all known compression couplings at service riser installations and replace them if the couplings do not have secondary restraint or are not resistant to pull outs.

Atmos Energy's highest priority is to continue providing safe and reliable natural gas service. The order simply makes a safe natural gas system even safer. Safety is the bedrock of our business. We will fully comply with any changes from the Railroad Commission's directive and/or rulemaking relating to the acceleration of the replacement of non-restraint compression couplings. We will also fully comply with any modifications to existing leak survey, detection and repair policies.

Customers who are affected will be contacted in advance and we will work with customers so that this action does not disrupt their natural gas service or the customer's work day. Providing excellent customer service, even during a special program, is important to us.

While there has been much discussion lately, let me assure you that we live here too and many of our employees are your neighbors. Our families live in natural gas homes, and that underscores why safety is something we talk about everyday.

You should know that Atmos Energy crews have gone to approximately 2,000 homes since the reports began. We have found very few of the homes even had the compression coupling in question. If the homeowner requested it, we removed the coupling and replaced it with a newer model. Now, we will simply replace all of the old couplings as described above, in accordance with the Railroad Commission directive.

Atmos Energy welcomes any discussion on safety because safety is a partnership between the company and the public. **ANYTIME you smell natural gas, please leave the area and then call 911 or 866-EC-ATMOS (866-32-28667), and we will send a professional to investigate.**

As part of our safety commitment, Atmos Energy spent more than \$96 million in the Mid-Texas service area during fiscal 2006 on system integrity, repairing third-party damage, leak prevention, maintenance, and other system upgrades to maintain safe and reliable operations. We are committed to meeting or exceeding compliance with all safety regulations.

Third-party damage - someone digging into natural gas lines - is a significant and costly cause of leaks. In 2006, Atmos Energy's Mid-Tex Division spent approximately \$4.3 million to safely repair more than 5,000 incidents of third-party damage to our pipelines. That equates to about 13 line-cuts each day. Everyone is urged to call the new national number 811 (similar to 411) to locate underground lines before they dig.

Thank you for being an Atmos Energy customer. If you still have questions please call 888-ATMOS-00.

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