

Hazards of old natural-gas pipes spur upgrades

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Millions of residents across the U.S. rely on natural gas to heat their homes, stoves and showers. But leaks along the thousands of miles of pipeline that deliver the fuel are a costly—and sometimes deadly—problem. An article in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN) examines what's being done to fix it and which locales are lagging behind.

Matt Davenport, an associate editor at C&EN, notes that gas leaks are a concern for three major reasons. One is that the primary component of natural gas is methane, a potent greenhouse gas when released into the atmosphere. Another reason is that [leaks](#) cost customers—to the tune of \$2 billion in 2013, according to one estimate. And third, natural gas can create deadly hazards. One explosion in a Pennsylvania town killed five people in 2011.

In response, the federal Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration called for states to speed up their pipe replacement programs. Some of the [natural gas](#) infrastructure dates back to the late 19th century. Currently, most states and the District of Columbia are working toward that goal, but with variable results. Vermont has completed its upgrades whereas New York's urban updates could take another 20 to 50 years to finish.

More information: "Cruisin' to Sniff Out Methane Leaks"
cen.acs.org/articles/93/i42/Im...thane-Emissions.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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