

Changes in Scenery Could Mean a Pipeline Leak

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Everyone has their own opinion about the increase of traffic in our little county. You may feel strongly about the current feeder road situation and want the exit moved. You may be a little afraid of what a loop around town might mean to local businesses, and you might be a little upset when your favorite restaurant is packed with people who “ain’t from here”.

No matter how you feel about those things, one thing is certain – and that is change. Change is sometimes difficult to swallow – and then we find it wasn’t so bad after all. Other times, we look forward to it only to find that it’s not quite what we thought it was going to be. Either way, change happens – it just does.

However, noticing change can be a gift. Seeing that something is different can actually save lives. For instance, if you go to work the same route every day, you get used to seeing the same thing. But when something is different along that route, you might notice it! It may take you a brief moment to process it and figure out exactly what is different, but we usually figure it out!

So, if you see discolored plants or trees in an otherwise green area, it might get your attention. Sometimes it might just be that a homeowner used some weed killer along a fence row, but it could be a sign of something much more serious – like a pipeline leak. You might notice a dense white cloud or fog coming from the ground in a limited area only, see bubbling in standing water, or an oily or multicolored sheen on land or water. You might see a mist of ice or a frozen area on exposed pipes or valves, or even flames that seem to be coming out of the ground or along pipeline valves. All of these “changes” from your normal view could be ways to recognize a pipeline leak.

Even if you aren’t seeing anything different, you may hear a “hissing” sound or a “bubbling” sound coming from the ground near a pipeline or in an area of the pipeline. You may even smell a strange or unusual smell, something that is a “change” from the way it normally smells in that area.

Knowing how to react is critical for your safety and the safety of others. If you suspect there might be a problem with a pipeline, do not attempt to extinguish a fire that might be fed by the contents of the pipeline. Don’t attempt to stop the flow by closing valves or operating any of the pipeline equipment, either. If you are in the immediate area, you should turn off any machinery, equipment and/or any lit pilot lights. Do not light a match, start an engine or even switch on or off an electric light. Do not drive into or near the area around the leak. Warn others to stay away from the area, and as soon as it is safe to do so, Call 911 to report the incident.

By noticing a small change, you may make a huge difference by saving a life or two! Be Safe Out There!