GAS SHUT-OFF VALVES

There are three basic types of automatic gas shut-off devices: two excess-flow types and one seismic type.

1. The simplest and least expensive is **a small excess-flow sensing fitting installed between each gas-fed appliance** (water heater, stove, fireplace, hot tub, etc.) and the gas line at the gas valve. The valves cost $15-$25. They are designed to sense gas excess flow coming to the appliance, and shut it off. They will automatically re-open when the break is repaired.

2. **An excess-flow valve fitting [resembling a 4" pipe nipple] installed in the gas line between the gas meter and the house.** If a break occurs in the gas piping downstream of the excess flow fitting, it will automatically shut off the gas for the whole house. Homeowners should await PG&E to turn the gas back on, or have a trained person do it. It is useful for controlling gas line breaks, including those caused by earthquakes. The valve costs between $90 and $120 but the installation can be expensive, depending on the configuration of the house piping, since the gas line has to be disassembled and retrofit with the insertion of the excess-flow device.

3. **A seismic gas shut-off valve** installed between the gas meter and the house. It is motion sensitive and will cut off the gas in case of earthquake. Homeowners should await PG&E to turn the gas back on, or have a trained person do it. The device costs $100-$120 depending on demand and the total cost should be between $250 and $450 when installed by a plumber.

Alameda County, Contra Costa County and other areas are starting to require these in all new homes, homes when sold, and in existing homes when an alternation or addition is made.

Homeowners should ask their home insurance agent about premium discounts for these safety devices.

We understand that the Oakland Fire Department and Police Department will focus their efforts in downtown Oakland in case of widespread emergency, making it imperative that Oakland Hills residents do whatever is necessary to prevent fires here.