

Unauthorized Electrical Grounding to Xcel Energy Natural Gas Meters

In order to maintain the integrity of Xcel Energy’s natural gas system, it is important that electricians, plumbers, cable companies, and all utility services understand that it is against the national and electrical code, and the National Fire Protection Association code to install electrical grounding to certain parts of Xcel Energy owned gas meters. In general, the recommendation is that utilities should use an independent ground rod, not a gas meter.

There has been a steady increase in grounding attachments discovered on Xcel Energy gas meters, and more specifically, attached to the gas supply side of the meter. (See image.) This type of attachment negatively impacts the cathodic protection system on the gas system that is intended to prevent corrosion and leaks on natural gas pipelines.

Xcel Energy must comply with the Department of Transportation Pipeline Safety Regulations, which require maintaining electrical isolation for the underground natural gas pipeline system from all foreign underground and aboveground metallic structures. If electrical grounding is improperly attached to an Xcel Energy gas meter, the natural gas system is no longer provided with corrosion control.

Please refer to the following:

National Electrical Code Article 250 – Grounding and Bonding 250.104 Bonding of Piping Systems and Exposed Structural Metal. (B) Other Metal Piping.

(Please note that our gas piping to our gas meter set is NOT likely to become energized and should NEVER be bonded to the grounding system.)

National Fire Protection Association Article 780 – Standard for the Installation of Lightning Protection Systems 4.14.1 General.

(Please note that Xcel Energy piping and facilities cannot assist in providing a path for lightning currents in or on a structure and therefore should never be interconnected to the lightning protection system.)

Xcel Energy employees have been instructed to remove any unauthorized grounding and to notify the customer who will in turn need to contact the utility that improperly attached the ground to the gas meter. In order to avoid inconveniences for all parties it is critical that grounding be attached to an independent rod or attached to the customer piping side of the gas meter.

Xcel Energy may bill the responsible parties for costs we incur to troubleshoot and determine the grounding locations, as well as for any damage found to have been caused to our gas facilities for the unauthorized grounding to Xcel Energy’s gas piping.

