

More Lifesaving Valves to Stop Gas Leaks Will Be Required in 2017

Starting next year, the federal government will require that all new or replaced gas lines for hundreds of thousands of apartments and small businesses across the U.S. must be equipped with special valves that can shut off gas automatically when a line is ruptured.

In a post on its website, **Androvett Legal Media & Marketing** reports that the government's Oct. 11 announcement expands the mandatory installation of excess flow valves beyond new single-family homes. The valves, priced at around \$30, don't prevent gas lines from being ruptured, such as when a backhoe accidentally hits one. But by limiting the amount of gas that escapes, federal regulators say the valves can prevent a buildup of fuel that can contribute to explosions or fires.

"These simple and inexpensive devices can save dozens of lives and millions of dollars in property damage each year," says Dallas attorney **Tom Carse**. "But gas companies, contractors and consumers need to understand how and where the valves should be located. Otherwise the devices will provide very little or no protection."

In August, Carse filed suit against Atmos Energy on behalf of 20 people who suffered physical and emotional injuries and property damage after a 2015 gas explosion destroyed four homes and heavily damaged nine others in their Waxahachie, Texas, neighborhood.

The lawsuit claims that Dallas-based Atmos Energy was negligent in how it located and installed the excess flow valves during construction of the subdivision. Court documents claim that the explosion occurred when an Atmos gas line was

cut by contractors who were working to install underground fiber-optic cable.