
Glossary

Aquifer storage field: A subsurface facility for storing natural gas, consisting of water-bearing sands topped by an impermeable cap rock.

Balancing item: Represents the difference between the sum of the components of natural gas supply and the sum of the components of natural gas disposition. These differences may be due to data reporting or survey coverage problems. Reporting problems include differences due to the net result of conversions of flow data metered at varying temperature and pressure bases and converted to a standard temperature and pressure base; the effect of variations in company accounting and billing practices; differences between billing cycle and calendar period time frames; and imbalances resulting from the merger of data reporting systems which vary in scope, format, definitions, and type of respondents.

Base (cushion) gas: The volume of natural gas needed as a permanent inventory to maintain adequate reservoir pressures and deliverability rates throughout the withdrawal season. All native gas is included in the base gas volume.

British thermal unit (Btu): The quantity of heat required to raise the temperature of 1 pound of liquid water by 1 degree Fahrenheit at the temperature at which water has its greatest density (approximately 39 degrees Fahrenheit).

British thermal units per cubic foot: The total heating value, expressed in British thermal units, produced by the combustion, at constant pressure, of the amount of the gas that would occupy the volume of 1 cubic foot at a temperature of 60°F if saturated with water vapor and under a pressure equivalent to that of 30 inches of mercury at 32°F and under standard gravitational force (980.665 cm. per sec. squared) with air of the same temperature and pressure as the gas, when the products of combustion are cooled to the initial temperature of gas and air when the water formed by combustion is condensed to the liquid state. (Sometimes called gross heating value or total heating value.)

Citygate: A point or measuring station at which a natural gas distribution company receives natural gas from a pipeline company or transmission system.

Commercial consumption: Natural gas used by local, state, and federal nonmanufacturing establishments or agencies primarily engaged in the sale of goods or services such as hotels, restaurants, and wholesale and retail stores and other service enterprises; and natural gas used by local, state and federal agencies engaged in nonmanufacturing activities.

Compressed natural gas (CNG): Natural gas which is comprised primarily of methane, compressed to a pressure at or above 2,400 pounds per square inch and stored in special high-pressure containers. It is used as a fuel for natural gas powered vehicles.

Depleted storage field: A subsurface natural geological reservoir, usually a depleted oil or gas field, used for storing natural gas.

Dry natural gas production: The process of producing consumer-grade natural gas. Natural gas withdrawn from reservoirs is reduced by volumes used at the production (lease) site and by processing losses. Volumes used at the production site include the volume returned to reservoirs in cycling, repressuring of oil reservoirs, and conservation operations as well as natural gas vented and flared. Processing losses include nonhydrocarbon gases (for example, water vapor, carbon dioxide, helium, hydrogen sulfide, and nitrogen) removed from the natural gas stream as well as natural gas converted to liquid form, such as lease condensate and plant liquids. We do not consider volumes of dry natural gas withdrawn from natural gas storage reservoirs as part of production. Dry natural gas production equals marketed production minus natural gas plant liquids production.

Electric power consumption: Natural gas used as fuel in the electric power sector.

Electric power sector: An energy-consuming sector that consists of electricity-only and combined-heat-and-power (CHP) plants whose primary business is to sell electricity, or electricity and heat, to the public. These facilities are categorized under code 22 according to the North American Industry Classification System.

Exports: Natural gas deliveries out of the continental United States (including Alaska) to foreign countries.

Gas well: A well completed for production of natural gas from one or more gas zones or reservoirs. Such wells contain no completions for the production of crude oil. EIA identifies natural gas wells using a natural gas/oil ratio (GOR) of 6,000 cf/b. Wells with a GOR greater than 6,000 are labeled natural gas wells while a GOR of 6,000 or less are labeled oil wells.

Gross withdrawals: Full well stream volume, including all natural gas plant liquid and nonhydrocarbon gases, but excluding lease condensate. Also includes amounts delivered as royalty payments or consumed in field operations.

Heating value: The average number of British thermal units per cubic foot of natural gas as determined from tests of fuel samples.

Imports: Natural gas received in the Continental United States (including Alaska) from a foreign country.

Industrial consumption: Natural gas used for heat, power, or chemical feedstock by consumers in manufacturing, mining or other mineral extraction, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. Also included in industrial consumption are generators that produce electricity or useful thermal output primarily to support the previously mentioned industrial activities.

Intransit deliveries: Redeliveries to a foreign country of foreign natural gas received for transportation across U.S. territory and deliveries of U.S. natural gas to a foreign country for transportation across its territory and redelivery to the United States.

Intransit receipts: Receipts of foreign natural gas for transportation across U.S. territory and redelivery to a foreign country and redeliveries to the United States of U.S. natural gas transported across foreign territory.

Lease and plant fuel: Natural gas used in well, field, lease operations (such as natural gas used in drilling operations, heaters, dehydrators, and field compressors) and as fuel in natural gas processing plants.

Liquefied natural gas (LNG): Natural gas (primarily methane) that has been liquefied by reducing its temperature to -260°Fahrenheit at atmospheric pressure.

Local distribution company (LDC): A legal entity engaged primarily in the retail sale and/or delivery of natural gas through a distribution system that includes mainlines (that is, pipelines designed to carry large volumes of natural gas, usually located under roads or other major right-of-ways) and laterals (that is, pipelines of smaller diameter that connect the end user to the mainline). In recent years, the sale of natural gas and/or delivery arrangements is more commonly handled by other agents, such as producers, brokers, and marketers that are referred to as *non-LDC*.

Marketed production: Gross withdrawals minus natural gas used for repressuring, quantities vented and flared, and less nonhydrocarbon gases removed in treating or processing operations. Includes all quantities of natural gas used in field and processing operations.

Native gas: Natural gas in place at the time that a reservoir was converted to use as an underground storage reservoir, as in contrast to injected gas volumes.

Natural gas: A gaseous mixture of hydrocarbon compounds but mostly methane. EIA measures wet natural gas and its two sources of production (associated, or dissolved, natural gas and nonassociated natural gas) and dry natural gas, which is produced from wet natural gas.

Natural gas liquids (NGL): A group of hydrocarbons including ethane, propane, normal butane, isobutane, and natural gasoline. Generally include natural gas plant liquids and all liquefied refinery gases, except olefins.

Natural gas marketer: A company that arranges purchases and sales of natural gas. Unlike pipeline companies or LDCs, a marketer does not own physical assets commonly used in the supply of natural gas, such as pipelines or storage fields. A marketer may be an affiliate of another company, such as an LDC, natural gas pipeline, or producer, but it operates independently of other segments of the company. In states with residential choice programs, marketers serve as alternative suppliers to residential users of natural gas, which is delivered by an LDC.

Natural gas plant liquids (NGPL): Those hydrocarbons in natural gas that are separated as liquids at natural gas processing, fractionating, and cycling plants. Products obtained include ethane, liquefied petroleum gases (propane and butanes), and natural gasoline. Component products may be fractionated or mixed. Lease condensate and plant condensate are excluded.

Natural gas plant liquids (NGPL) production: The extraction of natural gas plant liquids constituents such as ethane, propane, normal butane, isobutane, and natural gasoline, sometimes referred to as extraction loss. Usually reported in barrels or gallons, but may be reported in cubic feet to compare with dry natural gas volumes.

Nominal dollars: A measure used to express nominal price.

Nominal price: The price paid for a product or service at the time of the transaction. Nominal prices are those that have not been adjusted to remove the effect of changes in the purchasing power of the dollar; they reflect buying power in the year in which the transaction occurred.

Onsystem sales: Sales to customers where the delivery point is a point on, or directly interconnected with, a transportation, storage, and/or distribution system operated by the reporting company.

Pipeline fuel: Natural gas consumed in the operation of pipelines, primarily in compressors.

Repressuring: The injection of natural gas into oil or natural gas formations to enhance ultimate recovery.

Residential consumption: Natural gas used in private dwellings, including apartments, for heating, cooking, water heating, and other household uses.

Salt cavern storage field: A storage facility that is a cavern hollowed out in either a salt bed or dome formation.

Storage additions: Volumes of natural gas injected or otherwise added to underground natural gas reservoirs or liquefied natural gas storage.

Storage withdrawals: Total volume of natural gas withdrawn from underground storage or from liquefied natural gas storage over a specified amount of time.

Supplemental gaseous fuels supplies: Synthetic natural gas, propane-air, coke oven gas, refinery gas, biomass gas, or air injected for British thermal unit stabilization. It also refers to manufactured gas commingled and distributed with natural gas.

Underground natural gas storage reservoir capacity: Interstate company reservoir capacities are those certificated by FERC. Independent producer and intrastate company reservoir capacities are reported as developed capacity.

Vehicle fuel consumption: Natural gas (compressed or liquefied) used as vehicle fuel.

Working (top storage) gas: The volume of natural gas in an underground storage reservoir above the designed level of the base. It may or may not be completely withdrawn during any particular withdrawal season. Conditions permitting, the total working capacity could be used more than once during any season.