



9 PROPANE SAFETY TIPS FOR HOME HEATING

Propane gas provides many additional benefits for homeowners, as you can use it for heating water, cooking, washing, and drying.

It is important to think about safety first as you fire up your propane appliances in the fall and winter. Propane tanks include many features, such as carbon steel construction, puncture resistance and built-in pressure maintenance devices. Those safety features combined with following important propane safety tips can help you reduce the risk of accidents and keep your family and home safe. While this article is focused on propane safety tips, it is also important to remember that propane *is* safe and effective to use. There is a common misconception that propane is more dangerous than other fuels, which is not true.

Propane Safety Tips for Home Heating

Knowing how to detect a propane leak, when to get your system checked and what to do if you think there's an issue can ensure your propane system continues to run smoothly and safely. Follow these tips to get the most of your propane heating system.

1. Keep the Tank Clear of Clutter

Your propane tank needs plenty of space, so make sure items are not stacked up around it — especially flammable materials, such as paper or textiles, or anything that could ignite. In the fall, sweep up any leaves that might pile up near the tank, and in the spring, keep grass clippings and other debris away from it.

It is also a good idea to keep items away from any propane appliances in your home. For example, store newspapers and other flammable materials far away from the heating system or propane water heater, to minimize the chance of fire.



2. Install Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Since carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas, you need to have an alarm that lets you know when the levels of it in your home are higher than they should be.

Be sure to have a plan of action in case a detector goes off and periodically check the batteries to ensure they are still working.



3. Read the Owner's Manual

The owner's manual for your propane tank can provide you with specific information about the best way to care for it and how to increase its safety. The manual will let you know what to do if there is a leak or another hazardous situation. More likely than not, the manual will recommend contacting a dedicated propane specialist or emergency responder in the event of an emergency or to repair your tank.

4. Pay Attention to the Pilot Light

Your propane heating system might have a pilot light, a small flame that burns constantly. When the system is functioning properly, the pilot light should stay lit and not go out. A pilot light that regularly gets extinguished could be a sign of a problem within the system.

Although re-igniting the pilot light can seem like an easy enough fix to do on your own, your safest option is to call in a professional to fix the problem. Although it is not likely, there is the risk of fire or explosion if your propane heating system is not operating properly, and you attempt to re-light the pilot. For safety's reasons, you should call a professional service technician to examine further.



5. Know What to Do If You Smell Propane Gas

First things first, you need to know what propane gas smells like. Then, you need to know what to do if you or anyone else in your home notices the odor. The best way to describe the smell of propane gas is like that of rotten eggs. Some people might say that it smells like a skunk or a decaying animal. The unpleasant odor is not the natural scent of propane. Instead, the fragrance is added to the gas by manufacturers for safety reasons.

If you smell propane or think you smell it, extinguish any flames, such as the burners on your stove, put away any electronic devices, such as your smartphone, and leave the home immediately. Once you have safely left the home call 911.

6. Establish a Regular Delivery Schedule

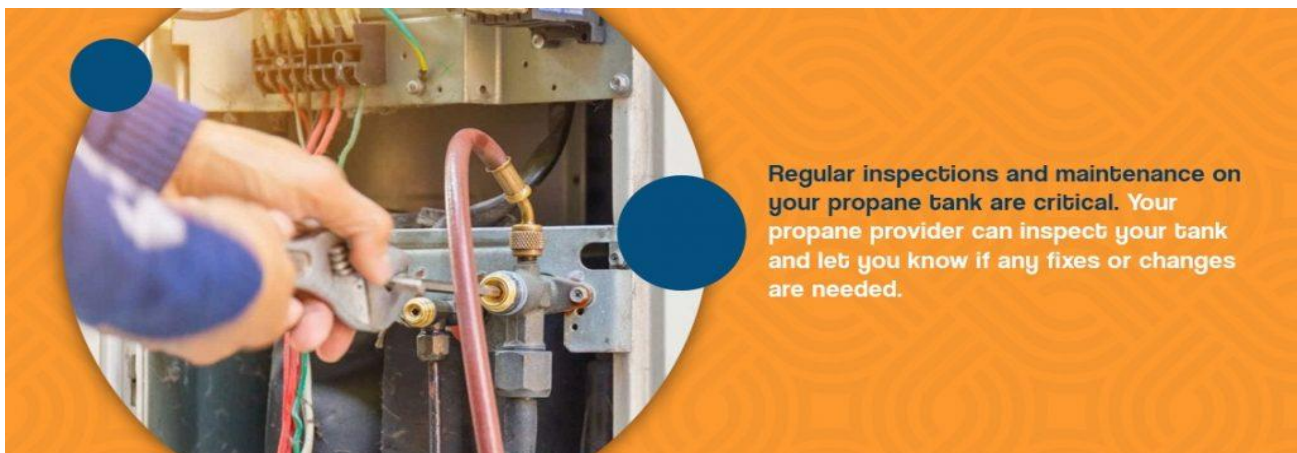
Regular delivery schedule and ensure you always have a sufficient supply of propane gas to heat your home. Periodically check your tank's fuel gauge even if you have automatic delivery.

Keeping an adequate amount of gas in your propane tank is also important for preventing leaks when the system is refilled. When you receive a new delivery of propane, a qualified service technician will perform a leak check or leak test to verify that your tank is in good working order.

You can protect your propane tank and prolong its life by keeping it filled.

7. Have your Propane Tank Serviced Periodically

Regular inspections and maintenance on your propane tank are critical. Your propane provider can inspect your tank and let you know if any fixes or changes are needed. Signing up for a service agreement with the propane provider can give you peace of mind that your tank and propane appliances will be regularly maintained and that any problems can be fixed quickly and easily.





8. Have a Professional Repair Your Propane Tank

It may seem that a problem with your propane tank or system is an easy fix and something you can solve on your own. For safety's sake, even if a problem seems simple, always call in a professional to look and perform any needed repairs. If you try to tighten a loose valve on your own or fiddle with the connectors or other parts, a leak or another, more complicated problem could develop.

9. Check on Your Propane Tank After Any Storms

After a storm, inspect your tank and remove any debris from the area. You might need to brush snow away so that vents and valves are clear. When removing snow and other debris from around your propane tank and system, use a broom rather than a shovel to reduce the risk of damage.

Most Common Signs of an Issue with Your Propane Tank or System

How can you tell if something is wrong with your propane system or the tank itself? There might be a few signs that let you know something is up and that you should call a technician in to look:

- **The smell of rotten eggs:** Often, people know that something isn't right with their propane system because they smell gas. If you notice a strange smell, particularly the scent of rotten eggs, it could be a sign that your tank has a leak or that there is something wrong with the system itself.
- **Rust on or in the tank:** If a tank runs out of fuel, rust can develop on the inside of the tank and, in some cases, on the exterior. If you see signs of rust, call your propane provider right away. Rust not only weakens the tank, but it can also interfere with the odor of propane, making it more difficult to tell when something is wrong.
- **Damaged tubing:** If your system uses rubber tubing to connect to appliances, the tubing should stay in good shape. Replace cracked or torn tubing as needed.
- **Dents or dings in the tank:** Dents or dings on the surface of your tank can be a sign that it is damaged or weakened. You might need to repair or even replace the tank, so let your propane provider know about any visible deformities.
- **Extinguished pilot light:** When the pilot light goes out, it could be a sign that the tank is out of fuel or that there is another problem with the system. A pilot light that goes out repeatedly could signal a problem with the appliance itself.