

Propane Safety

Safety at Home & Work



The following safety tips outline some important procedures and precautions for the proper use and storage of propane gas:

- Think Prevention! – Regular inspections by qualified professionals not only reduce the risk of leaks or malfunctions, but they also reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning from incomplete combustion and plugged or improperly vented appliances. Get your system checked regularly.
- Keep children away from propane storage tanks, shut-off valves and propane appliances. Ensure that papers and toys are kept away from furnaces, space heaters and gas fireplaces.
- Keep your face away from valves on your tank or cylinder. Liquid propane can cause severe frostbite if it comes in contact with your skin or eyes.
- Do not store or use flammable items or liquids (e.g., gasoline, paint thinner, kerosene, camp fuel, butane, gasoline, alcohol, and lamp oil) in or around propane appliances.
- Ensure that you know the proper procedures for turning the propane supply on and off. Contact your propane supplier for instructions.
- Propane is heavier than air, so when checking for leaks, be aware that it gathers in low-lying areas like floors, basements, crawl spaces, etc.
- Install propane and carbon monoxide detectors. These are a cost effective way to enhance safety and ensure any escaped gases are detected.

What to do if you run out of Gas

- Anytime you run out of gas, close the propane supply valve on the container and check all appliance valves to ensure they are closed.
- Do not attempt to re-light pilot lights or activate appliances.
- After delivery, have a qualified professional check to ensure the system is leak-free and the controls are operating properly.
- Have a qualified professional re-light pilot lights as per manufacturer's instructions.
- Contact your propane retailer to set up a regular delivery and annual maintenance schedule.

Treat Leaks Seriously!

Propane can be detected by its strong, distinct smell — like rotten eggs, a skunk, or boiling cabbage. If your sense of smell is impaired, call your propane supplier and consider the purchase of a propane gas detector.

If you suspect a gas leak:

1. Extinguish all smoking materials and open flames. Do not light matches or create any other source of ignition, including using electrical switches, flashlights, phones or cell phones.
2. Open all doors and windows. Close all cylinder and tank supply valves, and turn off all gas appliances.
3. Get everyone out of the building or vehicle immediately.
4. Go to a nearby phone and dial 911. Do not re-enter the area until it has been checked by a qualified professional or emergency responder.
5. After the area has been deemed safe, a qualified professional must repair the leak, turn on the propane, check all the propane appliances, and re-light the pilots on the appliances.

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Consult a Qualified Professional to Check for Leaks Regularly

- Have a qualified professional inspect, service, clean, and test your fuel-burning appliances and controls annually, and any time they are moved to a new location, or turned off for an extended period.
- Check for leaks regularly, including each time you change cylinders, run out of propane, move an appliance, or use an appliance after an extended period.
- Leave installation, moving, repairs, and maintenance to qualified professionals.
- During extended absences from your building, close all propane supply valves on the supply container and at each appliance. Upon your return, have a qualified professional test for leaks before the propane is turned on. Also have the technician re-light the pilot lights.
- Consult a qualified professional if you're adding a new fuel-burning appliance or making changes to your building's ventilation system, including adding insulation or new windows.
- Never use matches or lighters to check for leaks.
- Repeated problems with a pilot light may be a safety issue — call a professional.

Use and Maintain Appliances as Directed

- Refer to the manufacturer's installation and operating manuals provided with your appliances, and use appliances only for the purpose for which they are intended.
- Use only the fuel for which your appliance was specifically designed.
- Ensure your building and the area surrounding appliances are properly ventilated. Ensure the indoor and outdoor vents, and air inlet ducts for all appliances, are not corroded or blocked, and that they're open and/or turned on.
- When operating correctly, propane appliances burn with a blue flame. Yellow flames, or soot can indicate incomplete combustion, which may produce carbon monoxide. Turn off the appliance immediately and contact a licensed professional.
- When shopping for propane equipment and carbon monoxide detectors, always ask if the product is certified by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC). Many products sold outside Canada do not comply with Canadian safety standards.

Call Before you Dig

If underground tubing or piping brings propane to your building, call before you dig, and before making an addition to your building, doing major landscaping, or installing fence posts.

Check with municipal government offices for the phone number.

Storage & Handling

Store and handle cylinders outdoors, away from heat or sources of ignition (matches, smoking materials, etc.), and in a secure, well-ventilated area, off the ground, on a non-combustible base.

Never store propane containers indoors or in your garage.

Never store spare cylinders under or near the barbecue.

Never smoke while handling a propane cylinder.

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide, commonly known as CO, is a colourless, odourless and tasteless toxic gas. Propane appliances, like all other fuel-burning appliances, present the risk of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning if not installed, operated, vented or maintained properly.