

## SAFETY AND LOSS PREVENTION INSIGHTS



### Risk Report: Safe Propane Usage & Storage

Knowing how to safely store propane, along with understanding how propane responds to environmental conditions, helps not only prevent tanks from being damaged, but also prevents the tanks from causing damage to the surrounding property. When stored improperly, tanks can explode and “rocket” through and across facilities, causing damage to property and people. This Risk Report is intended to provide a basic overview of safe propane storage. For more detailed information regarding propane safety practices, organizations should review the related OSHA Regulations at 1910.110.

**What is Propane?** Propane, also referred to as liquefied petroleum gas or “LP Gas,” is an extremely versatile fuel and can be used in a broad range of fuel applications. Although propane is a gas that is commonly used in our homes and businesses, it can be extremely dangerous. When exposed to air, oxidizers, heat, or pressure, propane tanks can explode. Propane gas is flammable, with a flashpoint of 156°F. It is liquid fuel when stored under pressure. Usually, it is vaporized to gas before it leaves the tank. However, if the liquid meets skin, severe “freeze burns” or frostbite can occur. Propane usually has a strong odor that resembles rotten eggs, a skunk’s spray, or a dead animal. Smell is the best way to identify a gas leak.

#### Safe Propane Storage Tips:

- Never store indoors or in an enclosed area such as a basement, garage, dock-box, or shed.
- Never store under an eave, roof, porch, or other area attached to a building.
- Keep propane cylinders in a cool place and do not expose to heat above 120°F.
- Do not store propane with other tools and objects that could damage tanks.
- Never store next to an “EXIT” from the building.
- Storage area should be at least 25 feet from the property line.
- Tanks should be stored in a protected cage with proper signage.
- All tanks should be transported, stored, and secured in an upright position so they cannot fall, shift, or roll.
- Do not leave portable propane tanks in cars or closed vehicles.
- All tanks should be in good condition and properly labeled.
- Any employee or person handling propane tanks should wear leather or cotton gloves to protect their skin.
- Propane tanks must be properly disposed of at a recycling facility; propane tanks should never be put in a dumpster.
- Users of appliances fueled by propane must know how to turn the propane off at the source.

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#### Safe Propane Storage Tips (continued):

- Tanks expire. The manufacture date is stamped on the top of the handle. All tanks should be used within 12 years of the manufacture date. Tanks can be re-certified for 5 more years.
- All propane storage tanks need to comply with NFPA 58 regulations for Storage of LP-Gas.

#### What To Do When You Smell Gas:

- Put out all smoking materials and open flames.
- Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones.
- Leave the area immediately.
- Turn off main gas supply valve if possible (right, clockwise).
- Call 911 from outside the area to report the leak.
- Do not return until told it is safe to do so.
- Have cylinder inspected by service technician before restarting appliance.

#### Train Your Employees & Staff - Understanding Hazards is Key to Prevention:

- Train all your employees, including summer and temporary employees, on Safe Propane usage and storage.
- Share a copy of this Safety Report with all employees and staff.



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Safety & Loss Prevention Insights are created by Kellie Crete, Risk Strategies' Safety & Loss Prevention Expert. Kellie has more than 30 years of experience in safety and loss control and specializes in advising the marine industry and other niche segments of the commercial marketplace. Kellie is an OSHA authorized instructor.



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