

Keeping Your Family Safe: Tornadoes

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT PROPANE SAFETY AND TORNADOES

The purpose of this handout is to provide information you need to know about propane safety and how to keep your family safe during and after a tornado. By taking a few simple propane-related safety precautions and discussing them with your family, you can reduce the potential for property loss, personal injury, and even death.

▶ BEFORE: BE PREPARED FOR A TORNADO

- Know how and where to shut off the outdoor propane supply and indoor propane appliances. For more information, contact your propane supplier.
- **Make sure that you and your family know what propane smells like.** Propane has a strong, unpleasant smell like rotten eggs, a skunk's spray, or a dead animal.
- **Never** store or place a propane cylinder indoors or in an enclosed area such as a basement, garage, shed, or tent.
- It is recommended that you consider installing a carbon monoxide (CO) detector listed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) on every level of your home. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding installation, location, and maintenance.
- Propane gas detectors provide an additional measure of security. It is recommended that you consider installing one or more propane gas detectors listed by UL. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding installation, location, and maintenance.
- Have a list of instructions on how to turn off electricity, propane, and water. Review suggested preparations for natural disasters such as tornadoes with your propane supplier as well as other utility suppliers. Advise them of any special needs you may have.
- Create an emergency preparedness plan and review it regularly with your family in order to keep them safe during a potential disaster.



DURING: WHAT TO DO IF A TORNADO APPROACHES

Tornadoes can destroy buildings, down trees and power lines, and dislodge propane tanks and equipment. It is essential for you to understand what to do during this type of disaster. Listen to your local authorities, or television and radio stations, for instructions on the appropriate

course of action to take. In the event that a tornado threatens your safety:

If you are inside a building, go to the lowest level possible such as a basement or a storm cellar. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level.

If you are in a mobile home, trailer, or vehicle, get out immediately and seek cover in a sturdy building or storm shelter.

If you are outside and shelter is not available, lie flat in a nearby ditch or flat location. Be aware of the potential for flooding.

AFTER: WHAT TO DO AFTER A TORNADO

After a tornado has struck, use extreme caution and take the time to carefully evaluate the condition of all the structures on your property. If it is dark, use flashlights, not candles. If you have any doubts about your safety, leave the area immediately and have your property inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before re-entering.

Look carefully around the entire area. Check for downed power lines; they can create major safety hazards. High winds and hail can move, shift, or damage gas lines and tanks. If your propane tank becomes dislodged from its service line, it's likely to be leaking gas out into the surrounding area. A spark from a fallen power line or other ignition source could pose a danger to anyone nearby. Also, debris and water can find their way inside regulators and controls, causing potential safety issues. Immediately call your local utility company or propane supplier if any of these hazards exist.

FOLLOW THESE GENERAL SAFETY RULES

Tornadoes can cause power outages, flooding, or other events requiring you to take additional safety measures. To help reduce the potential for injury or death, there are general safety rules that you should observe at all times:

- **Never** store or place a propane cylinder indoors or in an enclosed area such as a basement, garage, shed, or tent.
- **Never** use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas. This can result in CO poisoning or death. These include outdoor portable heaters, barbecue grills, and portable generators. Only use appliances indoors that are designed and approved for indoor use.
- **Never** use a gas oven or range-top burners to provide space heating.
- **Do not under any circumstances try to modify or repair valves, regulators, or other appliance parts.**

- **Never** turn on a light switch, use any power source, or inspect your household appliances while standing in water. This can result in electrocution.
- **Do** inspect chimneys, flue pipes, and vent connectors for damage, blockage, or debris.
- **Do** inspect your propane appliances for water or other damage, if it is safe to do so. If the appliances have electric components and have been exposed to water, they can create a fire hazard.

If you find a propane tank on your property that is not yours, or if your propane tank has become dislodged or is missing, contact your propane supplier or your local fire department immediately.

AT ANY TIME: IF YOU SMELL GAS INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOME

No flames or sparks! Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or a fire.



Leave the area immediately! Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.



Shut off the gas. Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank, if it is safe to do so. To close the valve, turn it to the right (clockwise).



Report the leak. From a neighbor's home or other building away from the gas leak, call your propane supplier right away. If you can't reach your propane supplier, call 911 or your local fire department.



Do not return to the building or area until your propane supplier determines that it is safe to do so.



Get your system checked.

Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane supplier or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak free.



IF YOU SUSPECT ANY OF YOUR PROPANE APPLIANCES, EQUIPMENT, OR VEHICLES HAVE BEEN UNDER WATER OR THEY HAVE BEEN DAMAGED, OR YOU HAVE TURNED OFF YOUR GAS SUPPLY:

Do schedule a time for a qualified service technician to perform a complete inspection of your propane system. The technician can also perform a leak test on the system and re-light your pilot lights.

Do Not use or operate appliances, equipment, or vehicles, or turn on the gas supply, until your system has been inspected by a qualified service technician.