



# SAFE LIVING

*with*

# Propane

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**PRO**



**PROPANE GAS**

...clean, efficient, reliable

Florida Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services

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# Gas Safety Check

If your home has a propane furnace, water heater, range or other conveniences, you should schedule a gas check of your whole propane system, including the appliances.

Your local propane gas supplier will send a specially trained service technician to check your system for leaks and ensure that it meets all applicable safety standards. The technician will also check your tank, piping, regulators, gauges, connectors, valves, vents, thermostats, pilots, burners and appliance controls to make sure they are in good working condition.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services also suggests that homeowners who fuel furnaces and appliances with propane contact their local dealer about having their propane delivery accounts put on “automatic.” An automatic or “keep-full” account ensures that an adequate supply of gas will be available, no matter how cold the weather or treacherous the road conditions.



# Latch-key Children

Parents should make sure that children who are home alone know the rules of gas appliance safety.

Let your children know the typical noises your furnace, water heater or refrigerator can make. They will be less fearful when home alone if they know that your water heater normally gurgles or the furnace sometimes creaks and pops.

Children should know not to turn on propane gas appliances without parental supervision; to keep papers and toys away from furnaces, space heaters and gas fireplaces; and to steer clear of propane storage tanks and shut-off valves.

Although it is naturally odorless, propane gas has a rotten-egg smell added to it to help identify any leaks. Make sure your child recognizes the smell by using a “scratch and sniff” brochure available from your propane supplier. Tell your children if they smell gas, they should leave the home right away, without using any electric switches or appliances. Children should go to a trusted neighbor’s home for help, and call mom, dad or the fire department from there.



# Space Heaters

Propane gas heaters are either direct-vented or vent-free.

Direct-vent heaters require outside air to support combustion. They are typically installed on outside walls. Check the outside vent from time to time and keep it free of debris.

Vent-free space heaters use inside air to support combustion and vent directly into a room. Newer models have an oxygen-depletion sensor that automatically turns the unit off if room oxygen levels drop below a pre-set level.

All space heaters should be checked periodically by your local propane delivery company. A trained technician will inspect the unit, clean the burner and controls and check for proper operation.

Propane has an odorant added for easy identification of any leaks. If you smell gas, whether the heater is operating or not:

1. Do not touch any electric switches; do not light matches; do not use the phone.
2. Exit the structure immediately.
3. If there is an outside tank, turn off the gas valve at the tank. The valve is located under the dome or protective cover of the tank. To close it, turn the wheel or handle to the right as far as it can go.
4. Call your propane supplier or fire department from a neighbor's phone.



# Water Heaters

A little upkeep can make your propane gas water heater last longer and work more efficiently.

If the tank rumbles or creaks, collected sediment is the likely cause. Every six months, flush the tank by attaching a hose to the drain and letting the water run out for three to five minutes. Your owner's manual will show the drain location and the proper flushing procedure.

Water heaters come with relief valves that open automatically if the water temperature exceeds 210 degrees F or the pressure exceeds 150 psi. Once a year, check the relief valve by flipping the test lever. If water flows out when the lever is opened and stops without leaking when the lever is closed, the relief valve is in good working condition. If the valve is stuck or leaks, have a properly licensed propane gas technician put in a new one.

Also inspect the insulation outside your water heater and hot water pipes. Proper insulation can reduce energy consumption 5 to 10 percent – if your water heater is located in an unheated space.



# Gas Logs and Fireplaces

Have your propane gas log and fireplace systems checked each fall.

During your propane gas supplier's inspection, a trained technician will check the system, clean the control compartments and burners, and make sure all components are operating properly.



Propane fireplaces are either direct-vent or vent-free. Direct-vent units require outside air to support combustion and are typically installed on an outside wall. Check the outside vent to keep it free of leaves and debris.

Vent-free gas hearths, logs and free-standing stove units rely on inside air to support combustion and vent directly into the room. Newer units must have an oxygen-depletion sensor that automatically turns off the unit if the oxygen level gets too low.

If you smell gas, whether the fireplace or stove unit is operating or not, follow these steps:

1. Do not touch electric switches; do not light matches; do not use the telephone.
2. Exit the dwelling immediately.
3. Before you leave, close the valve on the tank that feeds gas to the appliance. The valve is located under the dome or protective cover of the tank. To close it, turn the wheel or handle to the right as far as it can go.
4. Call your propane supplier or fire department from a neighbor's phone.

## Storing Gas Grills

Propane gas grills should be cleaned before storage. You will need warm soapy water, a brass-bristle brush, a soft cloth, toothpicks, sandpaper, a bottle brush and your grill owner's manual.

First clean the briquettes and cooking grids. Flip the briquettes over so the greasy side faces the burner. Replace the grids, light the grill, close the lid, and set the flame on high for 15 minutes. Allow to cool, and remove any remaining grease with the brass-bristle brush and soapy water.

Next, turn off the burner controls and cylinder valve and disconnect the cylinder from the regulator assembly. Clean the burner unit with a soft cloth and soapy water. Then dry it and clear out each gas port on the burner with a toothpick. Clean the tubes with a bottle brush and set the entire assembly aside to dry. Check the tank for dents and rust, and replace if necessary.

Finally, wrap the gas orifices under the control panel with aluminum foil to keep them dry while you clean the grill housing with the brass-bristle brush and soapy water. Leave the foil in place to keep out insects and debris during storage.

For outdoor storage, keep the tank hooked up and cover the grill. Make sure the supply valve is closed. If you store the grill housing indoors, disconnect the tank and leave it outside in an upright position away from dryer or furnace vents and children's play areas.

## Gas Grilling Tips

1. Do not use a propane gas cylinder if it shows signs of external damage, such as dents, gouges, bulges, fire damage, corrosion, leakage, or excessive rust.
2. Before grilling, make sure the propane tank cylinder is secure to the grill as directed by the manufacturer.
3. After grilling, the cylinder must not be stored indoors or within any enclosed space.
4. Always open the grill hood before lighting, and light according to the manufacturer's instructions.



5. Never use gasoline or kerosene to start the fire.
6. Always grill in well-ventilated area. Do not grill indoors or close to the side of a building.
7. Use foil or drip pan to catch juices and help avoid grease fires.
8. To see how much propane is left in your cylinder, run a wet finger down the side. The wet streak will evaporate faster over the empty part of the cylinder.
9. Since a hot grill is easier to clean than a cold grill, clean with a wire brush or scraper immediately after cooking, then wash off.
10. To turn the cylinder valve on or off, remember “Rightie, tightie / Lefty, loosey.”

## Weather Emergencies

Take these steps to protect your family and property before and after a flood, hurricane or severe storm.

Getting ready for a flood or hurricane:

1. Properly secure propane tank, if possible.
2. Turn off the gas supply valve at the tank.
3. Fasten the protective dome on the tank.
4. Turn off appliance pilot lights, control valves and manual shut-off valves.
5. Ensure an adequate supply of fuel in the tank.



After the flood or hurricane has passed, look for visible structural damage, including damaged external venting and vent caps.

Call your propane dealer or qualified technician if:

1. You smell propane gas.
2. Your propane tank has shifted or moved.
3. The tank regulator has been exposed to water.
4. The gas lines are broken, bent, damaged, or have pulled away from the propane tank or appliances.
5. Propane appliances or their controls have been exposed to water.

## **Recreational Vehicles (RVs)**

RVs should be checked annually by a licensed propane gas supplier or licensed RV dealer.

The technician will check the system for leaks and proper regulator settings, inspect the valves and fittings, and inspect the propane tanks for excessive rust and dents. If the tank passes inspection, any minor rust touch-ups can be performed by RV owners. Replace dented or badly rusted tanks immediately.

Install the propane tank in the proper position. Arrows indicating the correct position are stamped in the metal of the tank. A horizontal tank must never be used in a vertical position, and a vertical tank must never be used in a horizontal position.

The technician should also check all your appliances, including the air intakes and exhaust vents. A common mistake is to forget to remove the access door and vent covers that were put on to prevent insect infestation during storage.

When refilling on-board propane cylinders, turn off the RV's engine, all appliances, and electronic re-igniters before you begin, and do not turn them back on until the refueling is completed and the fill hose is disconnected. All passengers should exit the RV during refueling.

If you smell gas, exit the RV without using electric switches or appliances. Leave the door open to air out the vehicle. Close the supply valve on the propane tank, and call a propane gas supplier or fire department from a nearby phone.

## Pools and Spas

Propane pool, spa, and hot tub heaters must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions, and in accordance with state or local building or fire codes. Learn and follow local regulations for the safe connection, use and storage of propane equipment.

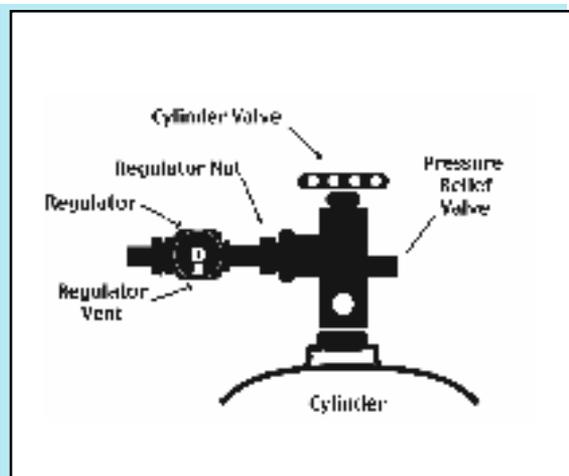


When lighting or re-lighting the pilot or turning the heater on or off, refer to the manufacturer's instructions on the name and rating plate, which should be attached to the heater inside the control compartment.

Do not place or drape towels, swimsuits or T-shirts on or near the heater or attempt to use it as a dryer.

Inspect your heater periodically to make sure it burns cleanly, is well-vented and it is free of leaks. Contact your local propane gas supplier to schedule a safety check on your heater and other propane-fueled home appliances.

If you still smell gas, whether the heater is operating or not, exit the pool or spa area immediately without touching any electrical switches, lighting, matches or using the phone. Before you leave, close the valve on the tank that feeds the appliance. The valve is located under the dome or protective cover of the tank. To close it, turn the wheel or handle to the right as far as it will go. Then call your propane supplier or the fire department from a neighbor's telephone.



# Camping Equipment

Inspect your propane camping equipment carefully before you leave home. Check for leaks by soaking each fuel cylinder connection with soapy water or leak solution and look for telltale bubbles. If you detect a leak, call your propane supplier. Do not store propane cylinders in temperatures above 120 degrees F.

Make sure your shelter, tent or camper is adequately ventilated. Never go to sleep with a stove, cooker or lantern still burning. Never operate fuel-burning equipment such as heaters or grills inside a tent. They can produce carbon monoxide which can be deadly in small enclosed areas.



Use propane stoves or fish cookers on a level surface in an open, well-ventilated area away from shrubs or dry wood. Before connecting the stove or cooker to the propane cylinder, make sure the valve is set at OFF.

If ignition doesn't occur immediately, turn off the gas, wait for it to dissipate, then try again. When lighting, keep your hands and fingers to the side of the burner, not over it, and keep hair, sleeves and shirttails away from the flame.

When repacking, storing or transporting a cooking appliance, remember to disconnect it from the fuel cylinder and let it cool down. Cover and store in a clean, dry place.

On lanterns, check the cylinder, valve connections and mantle before each use, and make sure no dirt has lodged in the valve. Never operate a lamp or lantern without a mantle or with a damaged mantle.



[www.propanefl.com](http://www.propanefl.com)

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This information provided by  
the Florida Department of Agriculture and  
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If you have questions about safety,  
contact the  
Florida Bureau of LP Gas Inspections at  
**(850) 921-8001.**