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Propane Safety and Winter Storms Steps to keep you and your family safe

Des Moines, Iowa – January 8, 2010 – Heavy snow, extreme cold, sleet and ice, and near-blinding blizzards may all be part of winter, but being unprepared for them shouldn't be. If your home or business uses propane to generate heat or run appliances, there are a few simple steps you can take to keep your family safe and avoid potential dangers.

- **Make sure your heating system and appliances are running efficiently.** Have a qualified service technician annually inspect and service your appliances and propane system. This will ensure that your appliances are running as efficiently as possible, conserving fuel and saving dollars.
- **Make sure you have an adequate propane supply.** During and after a winter storm, roads may be inaccessible for delivery. It is recommended that you establish a regular delivery schedule with your propane retailer. Due to the extreme cold temperatures it is very important to check your tank. If it reaches the one-quarter level, call your propane dealer.
- **Clear the snow.** You should clear heavy snow and ice from the regulator, regulator vents, piping, tubing and valves. Failure to do so can cause damage that could result in a gas leak. Appliance vents, chimneys, and flues also must be kept clear of snow and ice so appliances can vent properly. This is especially critical on the roofs of mobile homes. Clear snow carefully. Use a broom rather than a shovel to avoid damaging any components. Also clear the walkway and tank area so that propane company personnel have ready access to your tank.
- **Mark the location of your tank with a flag, pole, or stake** that is higher than the average snow cover depth for your location. These markers will help you avoid plowing or shoveling rooftop snow on top of your tank. Should your tank become covered with snow, use a broom to clear it.
- **After a winter storm passes and it is safe to do so, check the entire area for downed power lines, damaged gas lines, or damage to your propane tank.** Immediately call your local utility company or propane retailer if any of these hazards exist. Do not attempt repairs yourself.
- **Check your chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors, and propane tank for damage, blockage, or debris caused by snow and ice.** Use a broom rather than a shovel, and clear these areas frequently. This will help reduce the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning due to blocked or damaged chimneys, flues, and vents.
- **Never use a stove for space heating and never use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas, particularly in the event of a power outage.** Proper ventilation is necessary for their safe operation; and carbon monoxide fumes emitted can be lethal. Only use appliances indoors that are designed and approved for indoor use. Never store, place, or use a propane cylinder indoors or in enclosed areas.
- **Use extreme caution when operating portable generators.** Never use a portable generator (gasoline, diesel, or propane) indoors or in enclosed areas. This can result in carbon monoxide poisoning or death.
- **Exercise sound judgment.** Stay calm; use radios, television, and telephones to stay informed and connected. Remember, winter storms can last several days and roads may be inaccessible for fuel delivery.
- **Take immediate action if you smell gas inside or outside of your home or business.**
Follow these simple instructions:

- 1. No flames or sparks!** Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate or turn on or off lights, appliances, telephones or cell phones.
- 2. Leave the area immediately!** Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.
- 3. 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).
- 4. Report the leak.** From a neighbor's home or other building away from the gas leak, call your propane retailer right away. If you can't reach your propane retailer, call 911 or your local fire department.
- 5. Do not return to the building or area** until your propane retailer, emergency responder, or qualified service technician determines that it is safe to do so.
- 6. Get your system checked.** Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane retailer or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak-free.

For additional information on preparing for winter storms and other severe weather conditions and natural disasters, visit usepropane.com or contact your propane retailer.

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