



## Safety 101

Among other things, floods can sometimes cause a propane leak.

Any time you or anyone nearby smells propane, there are five simple safety tips to follow:

- FLAMES OUT (no smoking materials, fires, sparks or electronic devices)
- PEOPLE OUT (get everyone out of the house or building and don't go back in until propane experts say it's safe)
- GAS OFF (if it is safe to do so, shut off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank)
- CALL IN (go to a neighbour's house or a building away from the suspected leak and call your propane retailer – if you can't reach them, call your fire department or 911)
- CHECK UP (don't try to use your propane tank or appliances until a qualified inspector has checked out your entire system to ensure there are no leaks)

## KEEP YOUR HOME & FAMILY SAFE

Whether they are caused by spring thaws, mudslides, broken levees or other emergencies, floods can cause trouble for propane users who are not properly prepared.

Fortunately, a little knowledge and a few simple measures can help keep your home and family safe from the potential impacts of flooding on your propane supply and appliances.

While propane is among the safest fuels available (it is non-toxic and dissipates quickly if accidentally released into the atmosphere), it pays to be extra-cautious when floods threaten or hit your home.

## IF YOU KNOW A FLOOD MAY COME

You may not always get advance warning of a flood, but when public warnings are issued in time, there are several safety precautions you should take.

First, go over your emergency preparedness plan with your family. Every family should have a plan for what to do in case of emergencies, including escape routes from the house and a safe place to meet afterwards.

Be prepared to shut off the gas supply to your propane tank and appliances (see sidebar story on 'Flood-Proofing'), as well as the electricity supply to your entire house.

Whether you have your own propane supply tank, or if you receive your propane through a metered pipeline, you should know the right procedure for shutting off the supply. Follow your propane retailers' instructions to ensure there won't be a leak.

If there is enough time, speak to your propane retailer or a certified technician about the idea of temporarily removing and storing your hot water tank, range and/or dryer, as well as the electrical components of your furnace. Or alternatively, ask your propane supplier if your propane tank should be moved to higher ground or anchored in place to protect it from floodwaters. Only your propane supplier is authorized to move a tank.

Gather emergency supplies (food, water, blankets, clothing, flashlight, first aid kit, etc.) and any essential information or papers such as passports, ID and bankbooks. Your emergency kit should include a battery-powered or wind-up radio.

Then, keep listening to local TV and radio broadcasts for the latest information and advice.



# Propane Safety

## Flooding Safety Tips

PROPANE GAS  
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DU GAZ PROPANE



### Flood-Proofing

If you live where floods are possible and you use propane, there are steps you can take to decrease risk and increase your peace of mind.

Propane tanks (even full ones) will float in water, so ensure your tank is secured to a fixed object such as a pole.

Make sure you and your family recognize the smell of propane – it smells like rotten eggs or a skunk.

Learn how and where to shut off the gas supplies to your propane tank and appliances.

Always keep a good supply of propane in your tank. A serious flood could disrupt supplies for several days.

Your propane retailer can help you with these and other flood-proofing procedures and advice.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN A FLOOD HITS

When a flood is imminent or beginning, you will have to move quickly but calmly. It is better to take a moment and be sure you are doing the right things, and not forgetting any important steps.

Listen for the advice of local authorities to determine whether it is safer to stay in your home or evacuate. If it is safer to remain where you are, move your family and emergency supplies to the highest safe point in the house.

Whether you are staying or evacuating, it's time to shut off your propane supply. Be sure to close the service valve on the supply tank (or follow your supplier's instructions if you are on metered propane) and the burner control valve on each appliance, as well as turning off the electrical power to all appliances.

Do NOT drain your hot water tank, but shut off both valves – the one allowing water into the tank, and the one controlling water coming out.

Remember to turn off the electricity supply for the entire house as well.

## AFTER A FLOOD – STAY SAFE!

Once the flood waters have receded and local authorities say it is safe to return to your home, don't assume that you can stop taking precautions. Floods can have serious effects on your home's frame, foundations, appliances and energy supply. Fallen trees and downed power lines can pose hard-to-spot dangers around your home.

So, use caution when you return. If it is dark, use a flashlight – you should avoid candles or any flame or spark until you know it is safe. If you have any doubts at all about your safety, don't go in! Get a home inspector or engineer to check things out for you.

If there is still water in your home, be sure you are not standing in it when you inspect any electrical appliance, and be careful of potentially slippery surfaces.

You should not attempt to turn your propane (or electricity) supply back on until you have had a certified technician inspect the entire system. Floodwaters may have dislodged your tank, pipeline or appliances, or found their way into regulators and controls. Flue pipes, connectors and chimneys must also be checked for potential blockages.

Whatever state your house is in, don't be tempted to use propane improperly (e.g. using a propane stove as a space heater, or using an outdoor appliance such as a generator or BBQ indoors).

Of course, you will be anxious to return to your house and begin to get your home and life back to normal. However, the best first step in that direction is ensuring that you remain safe.