

# PROPANE SAFETY

## PROPANE

### What is it?

**Propane is a portable source of energy that can go places where utility lines can't, like RVs, campers, cabins and campsites.** Some communities not serviced by natural gas have underground lines distributing propane from a central propane facility or an on-site propane tank to fuel household appliances. Propane appliances should be maintained regularly and used only as intended to ensure safety.

### Smell Rotten Eggs? ACT FAST: GO OUTSIDE.

If you suddenly smell rotten eggs or hear the hissing sound of escaping gas, it could be a propane leak.

- 1. Stop what you're doing.** Don't use your cellphone or landline, don't smoke, light matches or operate electrical switches or create any other source of ignition.
- 2. Go outside.** As you exit, leave the door open behind you as well as any windows that may already be open.
- 3. Report it.** Once outside, call 911 or your local emergency number, and your propane provider's 24-hour emergency line:

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*(Write their number here so you have it handy in case of an emergency.)*

- 4. Stay outside,** until an official says it's safe to go back in.

### Cylinder Safety

**Propane bottled in cylinders is convenient for outdoor heaters and barbecues.** To transport and store them safely:

- Always keep cylinders upright
- Close valves completely when not in use
- Keep your face away from valves and wear gloves when handling. Propane can injure you if it comes in contact with skin or eyes.
- Store cylinders in a protected, well-ventilated, above-ground place. NEVER store them indoors.
- If a cylinder is damaged or is more than 10 years old, replace it or have it re-qualified. By law, propane filling stations can't refill a cylinder that is damaged or has an expired inspection date stamp.

### Tank Safety

**If you have an outdoor propane tank, paint it to prevent corrosion.** Be sure to choose a light or reflective colour to reflect sunlight so the tank won't overheat.

If you're winterizing your vacation property, consider closing the tank valves and shutting off propane appliances. When you return, have a licensed contractor inspect your system and relight appliances.

Keep the landscape surrounding your propane tank maintained, and don't let combustible material such as leaves and dry grass build up under or around it. This allows access for filling and inspection, as well as protection for the tank.



Office of the  
Fire Commissioner  
Emergency Management BC



## Pipe and Meter Safety

If underground pipes deliver propane to your home, keep the meter or regulator assembly safe:

- Keep it clear of garbage, leaves, ice, snow and items like tools and toys
- Don't enclose it with decks, sheds or fencing
- Don't tie anything to the meter or regulator

## BC 1 CALL

If you're planning to break ground, whether you're digging in the yard, building a fence or excavating a job site, **you must click or call BC 1 Call BEFORE you dig.** Even just hitting pipes with a shovel could cause a leak.

BC 1 Call provides you with the location of underground gas lines and other buried utilities in your area. It's free, fast and could help you avoid safety hazards and costly repairs. Note: BC 1 Call doesn't have any information regarding privately-owned propane systems.

Learn more at [bc1c.ca](http://bc1c.ca)



## Camping and RVing Safety

Tips for propane safety in the great outdoors:

- Transport tanks or cylinders upright and outside the RV or camper, securely fastened with valves pointed away from the vehicle
- Never store tanks or cylinders in the RV's living area
- When using the onboard stove or oven, open vents or windows and use the exhaust fan
- Never use outdoor appliances, such as camp stoves, gas-fired heaters or appliances inside an RV or tent
- Have appliances, tanks and/or cylinders checked annually by an RV shop registered with Technical Safety BC. Use the online search tool to find someone near you: [technicalsafetymc.ca/find-contractor](http://technicalsafetymc.ca/find-contractor)
- If you smell gas or suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get everyone out immediately and call 911 or your local emergency number



## Carbon Monoxide Safety

**Unlike the smell of propane, carbon monoxide (CO) has no smell at all, and is a by-product of burning fuel such as propane.** When there isn't enough fresh air to burn completely, or if exhaust is not vented to the outdoors, a build up of CO can result.

The risk of CO poisoning from well-maintained propane appliances is extremely low. You can reduce the risk even further by having a licensed contractor install, inspect and service your appliances as well as checking vents regularly to make sure they are connected, clear of obstructions and in good repair. Use Technical Safety BC's online search tool to find someone near you: [technicalsafetymc.ca/find-contractor](http://technicalsafetymc.ca/find-contractor).

If your home has any fuel-burning appliances/heaters, fireplaces or an attached garage, install a CO alarm on every level of the home and in sleeping areas. If you have an RV with any propane equipment, install a CO alarm in your RV.

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