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Storms and Floods Can Cause Problems With Your Propane Equipment

Safety Tips for Consumers Affected by Storm or Flood Disasters

(DES MOINES, IOWA) -- For those homeowners and businesses in the path of storms, hurricanes and floods who depend on propane gas to heat their water or homes, cook their meals, or fuel their farm equipment and buildings, the National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) has issued the following "before and after" safety tips.

Before the storm or flood:

- If you have to evacuate to higher ground, turn off the service valve on the propane container and the shutoff valve on all propane appliances. (Be sure to check first with your propane supplier if you don't know where the shutoff valves are located.) The container service valve should be left off until the system and appliances have been checked by a qualified service person.
- To secure propane equipment, tanks and cylinders in a severe flood, tie them to stationary objects. Wire cable instead of rope is recommended.
- If severe flooding is expected, and time allows, contact your propane supplier to ask if your propane tank should be moved to higher ground or secured. Only your propane supplier should move the tank.
- If less serious flooding is predicted, your propane supplier may choose to place the propane equipment on blocks to protect it from the flood waters.

After the storm or flood:

- Propane-powered household appliances, farm equipment or vehicles with controls or regulators that have been underwater should be inspected by your propane supplier before being put back into service. Since water damage to propane equipment and appliances is not always readily apparent, NPGA highly recommends a complete inspection of the entire system before attempting to operate equipment.
- The number one problem created by flooding is water damage of regulators and controls. Such damage can cause blockage, corrosion or other malfunction of the key safety devices that are built into the system. In addition, dirt or debris may have entered the regulator through the vent. While this is not an immediate threat, selected parts may need to be replaced to ensure the long-range safety of the equipment. Propane suppliers can also determine whether dents to the container or piping caused by flowing debris are serious enough to warrant equipment replacement.

- If your propane equipment has been flooded, be sure to shut off the service valve at the propane tank if you didn't do so before evacuating the property. This can be done by turning the valve in a clockwise direction. Be sure to have the system and appliances checked prior to turning on the gas supply.
- In the rare cases when people smell gas upon returning to their home, business or farm, they should extinguish all smoking materials and open flames. Exit the building immediately. Do not touch electrical switches, light matches or use the phone. Turn off the gas valve on the outside tank, meter or service area. Telephone your propane supplier and/or the fire department from a neighbor's phone. Do not re-enter until the building has been inspected.

While flooding conditions present challenges, following these recommendations will keep your family safe. For additional information on propane safety, contact your local propane supplier or visit the NPGA Web site www.npga.org.

The Iowa Propane Gas Association is the trade association for the propane industry in Iowa. IPGA represents approximately 350 companies, including producers, wholesalers, transporters, and retailers of propane gas as well as the manufacturers and distributors of associated propane equipment and appliances.