Propane Safety and **POWER OUTAGES**

Power outages can occur during any season and can range from being a simple inconvenience to, in some cases, a life-threatening situation. Almost any type of weather-related event can cause a power outage, ranging from snow and ice storms to thunderstorms, hurricanes, and extreme heat.

10 Things You Can Do to Keep Your Family Safe

If your home uses propane, there are a few simple steps you can take to keep your family safe and avoid potential dangers.

1. **Create an emergency preparedness plan and review it with everyone in your family.** Post a list with contact information for your propane retailer and emergency services (fire department, etc.) along with instructions for turning off propane, electricity, and water. If you do need to turn off your propane, contact a service technician to inspect your propane system prior to turning it back on.

2. **Consider installing UL-listed propane gas detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.** These detectors provide you with an additional measure of security. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding installation, location, and maintenance.

3. **Prepare a family disaster supply kit** with several days' worth of water and canned foods along with a can opener, extra clothes and blankets, flashlights, and batteries. Include a battery-powered radio so you can stay informed as conditions change.

4. **If a power outage occurs due to a severe weather-related condition, tune in on a battery-powered radio for instructions from local authorities.** It's recommended to turn off all the lights and appliances on your property that were operating before the outage occurred (with the exception of at least one light — to help signal when the power returns). This will reduce any type of power surge from occurring once the electricity returns.

5. **Use extreme caution when operating portable generators.** During power outages, some people may choose to use a portable generator, allowing them to keep food from spoiling, computers and other appliances working, and, in some cases, life-supporting medical devices operating. Never use a portable generator (gasoline, diesel, or propane) indoors or in an enclosed area such as a basement, garage, shed, or tent. This can result in carbon monoxide poisoning or death.

6 **Never use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas, particularly during a power outage.** This can result in carbon monoxide poisoning or death. These include such appliances as outdoor portable heaters, barbecue grills, and portable generators. Only use appliances indoors that are designed and approved for indoor use. It's also important that you never store, place, or use a propane cylinder indoors or in enclosed areas such as a basement, garage, shed, or tent.

7 **If severe weather-related conditions cause the power outage, it is important to use caution in the area surrounding your home or farm.** Check the entire area for downed power lines, damaged gas lines, or damage to your propane tank. High winds and severe weather can move, shift, or damage gas lines and tanks. If it is dark, use flashlights, not candles. Immediately call your local utility company or propane retailer if any of these hazards exist. Do not attempt repairs yourself.

8 **Inspect your propane appliances for water or other damage, if it is safe to do so.** A power outage can cause appliances such as a refrigerator or freezer to leak water, or a sump pump to stop working, which may cause propane appliances to get wet. If the appliances have electric components and have been exposed to water, they can create a fire hazard. Do not ever turn on a light switch, use any power source, or inspect your household appliances while standing in water. This can result in electrocution.

9 **Schedule a time for a qualified service technician to perform a complete inspection of your propane system** if you suspect any of your propane appliances, equipment, or vehicles have been under water or damaged, or you have turned off your gas supply. Never use or operate appliances, equipment, or vehicles, or turn on the gas supply, until your system has been inspected by a qualified service technician. Do not attempt repairs yourself.

10 **Exercise sound judgment.** As with any challenging situation, your composure during power outages and other severe weather events will ensure you don't take unnecessary risks or pose any additional dangers to your family and home. Stay calm; use radios, television, and telephones to stay informed and connected. If any questions arise, contact your propane retailer or local fire department.

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Taking these 10 simple steps can help promote safety all season long. With a little advance planning, you and your family can be prepared for unpredictable events such as power outages.

For additional information on preparing for power outages, natural disasters, and severe weather conditions, visit www.countypropane.net.