



## **MEDIA ALERT**

*For Immediate Release*

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## **Tornadoes, Power Outages and Propane Safety** ***Steps to keep you and your family safe***

**Epsom, NH (June 2, 2011)** – Tornadoes can occur during any season of the year, and New England has recently experienced the devastation that tornadoes can cause.

“In some cases, they can occur with little or no warning, bringing with them winds that can exceed 250 miles per hour,” said Joe Rose, president of the Propane Gas Association of New England. “And power outages can range from being a simple inconvenience to, in some cases, a life threatening situation.”

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.

### **PREPARATION:**

- **Consider installing UL-listed propane gas detectors and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors.** These detectors provide you with an additional measure of security. Be sure to follow the manufacturer’s instructions regarding installation, location, and maintenance.
- **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 along with instructions for turning off propane, electricity, and water.
- **Use extreme caution when operating portable generators.** 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 CO poisoning or death.
- **Never use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas.** These include such appliances as outdoor portable heaters and barbecue grills. 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.
- **If a tornado is approaching, immediately take action.** If you are inside your home or a building, go to the lowest level possible such as a basement or a storm cellar. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level. If you are in a mobile home, trailer, or vehicle, get out immediately and seek shelter in a sturdy building or storm shelter.

### **RECOVERY:**

- **If severe weather-related conditions cause a 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.
- **After a tornado has struck, use extreme caution and take the time to carefully evaluate the condition of all the structures on your property.** Check the entire area for downed power lines, damaged gas lines, or damage to your propane tank. 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.

- **If you find a propane tank on your property that is not yours, or if your propane tank has become dislodged or is missing, contact your propane retailer or your local fire department immediately.**
- **Never use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas.** 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. Never store, place, or use a propane cylinder indoors or in enclosed areas.
- **Inspect your propane appliances for water or other damage, if it is safe to do so.** 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.
- **Have a qualified service technician perform a complete inspection of your propane system** if you suspect any of your propane appliances, equipment, or vehicles have been 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.
- **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 more information on preparing for tornadoes and other severe weather conditions and natural disasters, visit [www.usepropane.com](http://www.usepropane.com) or contact your propane retailer.

### **About the Propane Gas Association of New England (PGANE)**

The Propane Gas Association of New England serves more than 600 members of the propane industry by promoting safety, education, and public awareness of the uses of propane.

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