

Above-Ground Propane Container Ownership: Know Your Responsibilities

Customers who own their containers are responsible for the upkeep and protection of the container.

If you currently own your above-ground container or are considering purchasing one, you should be aware of your responsibilities regarding the safe operation and maintenance of your container.

By understanding your role in keeping your propane container operating safely and efficiently, you can keep your family secure and enjoy all the benefits that propane delivers.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS

A well-maintained container will last for many years. It is important that you know how your container and delivery system work, what your responsibilities are, and what to do in the event of a safety-related emergency.

Customers who own their containers are responsible for the upkeep and protection of the container. It is also your responsibility to comply with all local, state, and national code requirements.

Propane container installation, maintenance, and repair should be performed only by a qualified service technician. If you own your container, you are responsible for finding a qualified service technician to service your container. It is a good idea to identify and talk to qualified service technicians – before a problem occurs – to make sure they are capable of servicing your container in a timely and safe manner.

Many propane suppliers provide preventive maintenance and repair services. Ask a propane supplier for more information on these programs.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the DOT require periodic recertification of stationary cylinders by qualified service technicians. DOT stationary cylinder recertification periods vary from five to twelve years. The owner is responsible for the cost to recertify the cylinder.

WHAT IS A PROPANE CONTAINER?

Propane containers come in many sizes and shapes. There are two basic types of containers for residential and commercial use: American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) tanks and Department of Transportation (DOT) cylinders.



ASME tanks are a common type of container used by customers to provide fuel for their homes. These tanks are typically installed horizontally and range in size from 120 to more than 1,000 gallons. You can identify an ASME tank by the data plate located under its dome. An ASME tank will have a “clover leaf” marking on the nameplate.



DOT cylinders that provide fuel for homes are called stationary service cylinders. A stationary service cylinder is usually installed vertically and tends to be smaller in size than an ASME tank. A stationary service cylinder will have a stamped marking on the collar identifying it as a DOT cylinder.

It is important to know which type of propane container you own. There are specific requirements and responsibilities for each type of container.





LOCATION OF CONTAINERS

Propane containers have distance and placement requirements depending on the type of container. For example, ASME tanks must be installed at least 10 feet from a building or line of an adjoining property.

When installing your container and any enclosures around the container such as fences or boxes, there are code requirements that you must follow. Also, keep in mind that a propane delivery truck and personnel will need clear access to the container.

PAINTING YOUR CONTAINER

Propane containers must be painted to help prevent corrosion. In most cases, your container will already be painted when you purchase it. If you do paint your container, use only reflective colors. Do not paint the data plate or any valves, gauges, or warning labels. If the data plate is not legible, the container may not be able to be refilled. Contact a propane supplier for more information on location requirements for your specific container.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

For more information on the responsibilities, rules, and maintenance requirements of propane container ownership described in this brochure, please contact your local propane supplier.

If you need assistance in determining when you will need to recertify your DOT stationary cylinder, contact a propane supplier, the DOT, or the NFPA.

Contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a propane supplier, or the container manufacturer for more information on the proper anchoring of a propane container in areas prone to flooding

PROTECTING YOUR CONTAINER

Protecting your container from flooding

In areas prone to flooding, national regulations require that propane containers be anchored securely to avoid potentially dangerous situations. You must have your container properly anchored if you live in or near a flood plain, or in an area where coastal flooding may occur.

Protecting your container against an earthquake

In areas prone to earthquakes, local codes may require you to securely anchor your container. Check with your local authorities or a propane supplier in your area to see if any code requirements apply.

Protecting your container against extreme weather

Make sure your container and propane system are properly secured for all types of extreme weather that may occur in your area. It is your responsibility to have your container repaired and inspected by a qualified service technician if damaged from extreme weather such as hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and high winds.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Understand all warnings and labels

Make sure you understand and follow all warnings and labels on your container and propane system. This will help to ensure your system operates safely and efficiently.

Understand your container warranty

Some manufacturers will extend their warranty only to the original purchaser of the container. If you purchase a container from a dealer or other party, the warranty will be voided. Make sure you understand the terms and conditions of the warranty before you decide to purchase a container.

Check with your homeowner's insurance provider

Some insurers may have special conditions or requirements specific to container ownership. It is a good idea to contact your homeowner's insurance provider, inform them that you own your container, and confirm that you have insurance coverage in the event of a problem.

If you choose to own, it's up to you to take care of your container

You assume many responsibilities when you own a propane container. The proper installation, maintenance, and care of your propane container can provide you with many years of safe and comfortable service. Remember, only you can keep your propane container operating smoothly and, more importantly, keep your family safe. The best way to do this is to understand the responsibilities of propane container ownership.

THE PROPANE EDUCATION & RESEARCH COUNCIL was authorized by the U.S. Congress with the passage of Public Law 104-284, the Propane Education and Research Act (PERA), signed into law on October 11, 1996. The mission of the Propane Education & Research Council is to promote the safe, efficient use of odorized propane gas as a preferred energy source.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about propane, or the Propane Education & Research Council, visit Propane.com.