

Millions of people enjoy the freedom, flexibility, and comforts of recreational vehicle travel. But, along with their unique privileges, RVs come with unique maintenance needs that can become complex when RVs are rented, resold, rebuilt, or used by many parties. Ultimately you are your best protection. Whether you're a long-time owner or first-time traveler, it's important to know about your RV's propane system. Take a few minutes to read this brochure and learn how to manage it safely.



## The RV Propane System

Your propane system (liquefied petroleum gas or LP gas system) is a very important part of your RV. It can provide heat and hot water, power your stove and refrigerator, and fuel barbecue grills or other small appliances. There are two basic types of propane containers and systems:

- Department of Transportation (DOT) cylinders
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) tanks

Travel trailers, folding camping trailers, and fifth-wheel units use two movable DOT cylinders, which are positioned vertically upright and mounted to the outside front or back of the RV. Motor homes use a single, permanently installed ASME tank, positioned horizontally, and located underneath the cabin, near the entryway. Regardless of container type, all refilling, repair, or replacement must be done by certified service technicians.

→ It is not "normal" for propane systems to leak. If you detect a leak—or sense a propane odor (rotten egg smell)—have it checked out immediately.

## RV Modifications

Over the lifetime of an RV, modifications and enhancements may have been made by the current or previous owners. These can include the replacement or use of larger propane cylinders (up to 40 lb capacity); installation of vent protectors (mud daubers); or installation of propane taps for barbecue grills, generators, and other outdoor propane appliances. Keep these in mind as you do your inspections and check accordingly.

While you may do touchups to your RV from time to time, do not paint propane cylinders, valves, or mounting hardware. This may mask important service issues, affect valves, or result in system failure.

→ Make sure your system is inspected at least annually by a certified service technician. Their extensive training enables them to detect incorrect tank pressure, leaks, or other potential hazards, and address them properly. Do not connect your propane piping to another gas source or attempt to repair any propane-related component yourself.

# Propane and Your Recreational Vehicle

A guide to help safely maintain and use propane in RVs



IMPORTANT PROPANE SAFETY  
INFORMATION FOR YOUR RV

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## Before You Go

In addition to checking your propane fuel gauge, you'll want to follow these quick tips:

- Check exterior vents and clear any debris, sticks, dust, twigs, insects, or other items that may restrict venting.
- Inspect propane cylinders and holding mechanisms for any signs of rust, corrosion, fatigue, or wear and tear. For ASME tanks, check the brackets and mounting hardware, as well. Have a certified service technician check out any issues.
- If you are bringing additional propane cylinders, make sure they are stored secure, upright, and in area where there is ventilation, such as in a dingy (towed car) with open windows or in the battery box.
- Inspect connections leading to your propane appliances for frays or damage.
- Make sure your RV has at least one Class BC fire extinguisher and operational propane, carbon monoxide, and smoke detectors. If you need to replace or install a new detector, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions regarding installation, location and maintenance. **EXIT THE VEHICLE IMMEDIATELY IF ANY OF THESE DETECTORS GO OFF.**

→ Any time you use portable propane appliances, such as generators or heaters, it's important to provide for ventilation. Follow all appliance manufacturer safety instructions.

**It's a good idea to read your RV owner's manual and appliance manuals before you go, and follow their instructions. If you do not have copies, contact your RV manufacturer or dealer. If you have received any recall notices on appliances—or anything in your RV—have your vehicle serviced right away.**

## On the Road

Most RV refrigerators can keep food/beverages cold during several hours of travel without a power source. It is recommended that propane systems be turned off while driving.

### Other safety tips while traveling:

- Shut off propane supply valves, pilot lights, ignitors, and appliances, and have everybody exit the vehicle during refueling.
- Do not use range burners for heat, or any appliances for means other than their intended use.
- Extinguish all smoking materials any time you are near tanks, filling stations, or other equipment where gasoline or propane may be present.
- Turn off propane supply valves before entering tunnels or enclosed areas. Be sure to follow any postings around restricted areas, such as military bases.

## At Campgrounds/Destinations

Propane is a great resource to cook food, cool beverages, or provide warmth/power at rest stops and campgrounds. Keep in mind some key safety considerations:

- Open a window and turn on your exhaust fan when using your stove.
- Portable fuel-burning equipment including wood, charcoal, and propane grills and stoves should not be used inside the RV or near the entryway. The use of this equipment inside an RV can cause fires or carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Keep your vehicle a safe distance away from any heat source, such as grills or fire pits. Keep propane tanks and cylinders at least 10 feet away from heat sources.

## If You Smell Gas



1. Immediately put out all smoking materials, pilot lights, and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or fire.
2. If you are able to, safely turn off the gas supply valve on your cylinder or container.
3. Open all doors and other ventilating openings.
4. Immediately leave the area and call 911 or the local fire department.
5. Before you restart or use any of your propane appliances, have a qualified service technician inspect your entire system.

## Winterizing/Storage

When storing your vehicle, turn off all propane appliances and power and keep vents open. There is no need to remove or deplete propane tanks. If you do remove, make sure to store them securely in an upright position, in a well-ventilated area. You'll want to conduct a thorough inspection of your RV when you take it out of storage.

→ If you're in an area where your RV is exposed to extreme temperature changes or inclement weather such as tornadoes, sand storms, or coastal winds, your propane system could become more easily damaged. Consider having periodic inspections (e.g., bi-monthly, quarterly), instead of annual ones, by a certified service technician.

## Have Fun and Be Safe

Whether you're on your first trip or a longtime enthusiast, RVs offer an exciting way to travel. Your propane system is essential to your comfort and enjoyment.

Please keep this brochure in an easily accessible location in your RV. Share this information with your family and traveling companions to help keep everyone safe and to reduce the risk of accidents.

## Important Contacts

Service Technician \_\_\_\_\_

RV Dealer \_\_\_\_\_

RV Manufacturer \_\_\_\_\_

