

# Orchard Farm Fire Protection District Standard Operating Procedure

Division: 200      Emergency Operations  
Section: 202      Fire & Rescue  
Subject: 202.18      Propane Emergencies



Supersedes: N/A

Approved By: 

Date: 05/22/2013

Date Last Reviewed: N/A

Page: 1 of 1

---

## PURPOSE:

To define the District's response to propane emergencies

## RESPONSIBILITY:

All District Personnel

## PROCEDURES:

Propane gas is colorless and odorless. The propane company adds an odorant (ethyl mercaptan) so personnel can smell the propane in the event of a leak. Propane gas is heavier than air and will migrate to lowest points (i.e. basements, crawlspaces).

### On-scene:

All responding apparatus will approach the area with caution. All firefighters must be in full personnel protective equipment including SCBA. The On-Scene Commander will determine the nature of the leak, set up perimeters (hot, warm, and cold) and request the required services if not already enroute (propane provider, St. Charles County Haz-Mat, EMS). During propane tank fires, the potential always exists for an explosion known as Boiling Liquid Expanding Vapor Explosion (BLEVE). To reduce this risk, Fire fighters should do the following:

Fight fire from the maximum distance possible, or use unmanned hose holders or monitor nozzles. Cool containers by flooding them with large quantities of water until well after the fire is out. Do not direct water at the source of leak or at safety devices; icing may occur. Leave the area immediately if you hear a rising sound from venting safety devices or see discoloration of the tank. For massive fires, use unmanned hose holders or monitor nozzles; if this is impossible, leave the area and let the fire burn. Be aware that when a BLEVE occurs, sections of the tank can fly in any direction. Just avoiding the ends of the tank should not be considered a safe operating procedure.