

Securing Propane Storage Tanks Before and After Flooding

Propane storage tanks are used on many farms and can be found in towns and outlying residential areas throughout the floodplain. They can become serious hazards, especially during floods. Risks include release of flammable gas into the atmosphere, fire, explosion and mechanical damage from floating tanks. To reduce the risk associated with propane storage tanks, before and after a flood, follow these procedures – both inside and outside flood-protected areas. These are particularly important if you need to evacuate.

Before flooding

- Small portable propane tanks (barbecue, forklift, RV tanks, 100-pound cylinders) should be removed to higher ground and secured so they will not float away. Valves must be tightened so the tanks will not leak. Do not leave tanks in non-ventilated sheds or buildings. High water may wash them out and downstream. It's advisable to move them out of the flood prone area.
- Larger portable tanks and construction tanks on wheels should be disconnected; moved to higher ground; and secured so that they will not float away. Valves must be tightened so the tanks will not leak. It's advisable to move them out of the flood prone area.
- Large storage tanks that are in use and left online until the last minute must have the tank supply valve shut off to guard against leaks – tanks that are still connected could be moved by flood water and start leaking. If there's time, contact your propane supplier to have the tank disconnected.
- All large storage tanks should be tied to an immovable object. This will allow them to float but not leave the property. Some suggestions include a screw-in ground anchor, nearby tree or building. The ties should be long enough to allow the tank to float up and not be held under water. Chains are best for tying tanks, but strong rope will also work.
- Do not tie tanks to power poles because they could move or pull the pole down and cause a power failure. Any contact with power poles during a flood is extremely dangerous.
- Consider installing a permanent anchor for your tanks to avoid problems during future floods.

After flooding

- Check tanks for damage and leaks. Look for dents, torn or disconnected supply lines, broken valves, etc.
- Contact a propane contractor to inspect all tanks and equipment associated with the propane system, before reconnection and use.
- Call the 24-hour emergency response line toll free at 1-855-944-4888, to report any loss of product, missing containers or packages; or if a propane tank appears on your property after a flood.