



Propane Safety and WILDFIRES

Wildfires, which occur in several types of climates and terrains, are a real danger and can pose a threat to people in many areas across the country. According to the National Fire Protection Agency, over 140,000 wildfires occur annually in the United States. Once a wildfire is started, drought or high winds can help them quickly gain strength and travel great distances in a short period of time.

The two most common types of wildfires are forest fires and grass/brush fires. Forest fires are commonly found in areas such as western state woodlands, mountain region forests, and other wooded areas across the country. Grass/brush fires often occur in rural areas and are most common during periods of drought or hot weather.

Wildfires can spread quickly and destroy or damage homes and property, including propane tanks and appliances. In addition to the intense heat and flames of a wildfire, fallen trees and power lines can present major problems for homeowners and emergency responders. Often, they block access routes for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles.

10 Things You Can Do to Keep Your Family Safe

If your home uses propane, there are a few simple steps you can take to keep your family safe and avoid potential dangers.

- 1 Clear at least a 10-foot area around your propane tank and gas grill of any debris.** Remove anything that is combustible or easily ignited, including leaves, brush, vegetation, and rags. Make sure the grill and all propane cylinders are at least 10 feet from any structure. Never store, place, or use a propane cylinder indoors or in an enclosed area such as a basement, garage, shed, or tent.
- 2 Have an adequate supply of propane in your tank.** During and after a wildfire, propane and other types of fuel may not be readily available and roads leading to your home or farm might not be accessible for delivery.
- 3 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 (fire department, etc.) along with instructions for turning off propane, electricity, and water. If you do need to turn off your propane, contact a service technician to inspect your propane system prior to turning it back on.
- 4 Prepare a family disaster supply kit** with several days' worth of water and canned foods along with a can opener, extra clothes and blankets, flashlights, and batteries. Include a battery-powered radio so you can stay informed as conditions change.

- 5 If a wildfire threatens your safety, you should 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). Also, it's a good idea to turn off the gas supply valves located near individual indoor appliances. Consult your propane retailer to make sure you know where the actual valves are located and how to shut them off. If you have a propane fireplace or log set, close any screen, door, or damper.
- 6 Listen to your local authorities, or television and radio stations to determine if you need to evacuate your home or farm.** If you do evacuate, use extreme caution when returning to your property. If you have any doubts about your safety, leave the area immediately and have your property inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before re-entering.
- 7 After the wildfire danger has passed, take the time to carefully evaluate the condition of all the structures on your property.** If it is dark, use flashlights, not candles. Look carefully around the entire area. Check for downed power lines; they can create major safety hazards. Inspect your gas lines and tank for damage. Inspect chimneys, flue pipes, and vent connectors for damage, blockage, or debris. Immediately call your local utility company or propane retailer if any of these hazards are observed.
- 8 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.
- 9 Schedule a time for a qualified service technician to perform a complete inspection of your propane system** if you suspect any of your propane appliances, equipment, or vehicles have been under water or 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.
- 10 Exercise sound judgment.** As with any challenging situation, your composure during wildfires will ensure that you don't take unnecessary risks or pose any additional dangers to your family and home. Stay calm; use radios, television, and telephones to stay informed and connected. Remember, wildfires can last several days and roads may be inaccessible for fuel delivery or emergency services. If any questions arise, contact your propane retailer or local fire department.