

## Building Customer Trust Starts with Safety

We buy from people we trust — it's that simple. And in our business, actions speak louder than words.

“As industry experts and leaders, propane distributors are in a unique position to set safety expectations for employees, customers and the general public,” says Eric Kuster, vice president of safety, education, and compliance at the Propane Education & Research Council. “The safety practices that distributors do or do not implement have the power to influence everyone’s attitudes toward safety, so it’s important that distributors lead by example.”

Suppliers must go above and beyond to demonstrate they care about their customers’ well-being. With winter on its way, suppliers can reinforce their commitment to safety by reminding customers of important seasonal best practices, says Scott Pearson, director of risk and asset development at CHS Propane.

### Five winter propane safety tips your customers should know

With weather forecasts predicting frigid temperatures and a battery of snowstorms, suppliers can help propane users stay safe this winter — and in doing so, build valuable trust with their customers — by sharing the following tips.

#### 1. Clearly mark propane tanks

When a winter storm hits, finding a propane tank under feet of snow can be a difficult job. To make tanks easier to spot, customers should mark the location of their tanks with flags, poles or stakes. When selecting a marker, they should make sure to choose something that’s taller than the average snowfall in their area.

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## 2. Remove snow and ice from propane tanks

In the event that a propane tank becomes covered in snow, instruct the customer to clear it off using a broom — not a shovel — to prevent damage to system components. Regulators, regular vents, piping, tubing and valves should all be kept exposed. For easy access to tanks, customers should always maintain a clear and plowed pathway to them.

## 3. Notify snowplow contractors of propane tanks

After a heavy snowfall, it's possible for a snowdrift to completely hide a propane tank. Customers who utilize snowplow contractors should make sure the operator knows the locations of all propane tanks on the property. If a snowplow were to come into contact with a propane tank, it could become a potentially serious safety hazard.

## 4. Consider a propane-powered generator

When a storm knocks out the power, it can sometimes take days for rural roads to be accessible to repair crews. A propane-powered backup generator can provide customers with peace of mind that they won't be stuck without power in the event of a blackout. Remember, even if a generator is portable, these should never be used indoors or in an enclosed space.

## 5. Maintain an adequate propane supply

Even after a winter storm is over, roads can still be inaccessible by delivery trucks for days. To sustain any periods of interrupted deliveries, it's important for customers not to let their propane tanks get too low. Suppliers who offer automatic deliveries can suggest this solution to help their customers ensure their tanks are topped off adequately.

**“ Propane customers don't want a supplier who only thinks about safety compliance. What they want is a supplier who's committed to safety excellence. ”**

— Scott Pearson, director of risk and asset development  
at CHS Propane

“Prioritizing safety can be a true competitive advantage,” Pearson says. “Propane customers don't want a supplier who only thinks about safety compliance. What they want is a supplier who's committed to safety excellence.”

## How propane suppliers can save on safety expenses

To help propane suppliers build safety into every part of their business, CHS offers a safety

reimbursement program. For every gallon of propane a supplier sources from CHS through the program, a portion of the purchase price is invested into an individual safety fund. Suppliers can redeem the balance to defray the cost of qualifying safety expenses, including safety equipment, educational materials, community education, marketer training and more.

“Running a safe propane operation requires a commitment of both time and money,” Pearson says. “The CHS Safety Reimbursement Program is designed to ensure that financial hurdles don’t stand in the way of safety.”

All CHS Propane marketers are eligible to apply for the program. Marketers who are not currently partnering with CHS Propane can learn about making the switch by visiting [CHS Propane Insights](#) or by calling 1-800-852-8184. Current CHS Propane suppliers can learn more about submitting a safety reimbursement request by contacting their CHS Propane account manager.

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