

Propane Safety during a Pandemic

Policies, Procedures, and Tips for Propane Marketers

BY ERIC LESKINEN



Circumstances caused by the global Coronavirus pandemic have disrupted daily life across the world. While most businesses have been required to slow down or completely stop operations, the propane industry remains an essential industry that continues to operate while navigating these uncertain times. Due to this unprecedented scenario, we have gathered several safety tips and suggestions to help guide your propane safety program.

UTILIZING PANDEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Propane Education & Research Council suggests that all propane marketers have company-specific policies and procedures in place in response to circumstances of COVID-19. Why is this an important addition to your company's Policies & Procedures Manual? Pandemic policies and procedures outline how your company will operate during a pandemic scenario to mitigate risk and continue operations as safely and seamlessly as possible.

A pandemic policy includes the scope of written language to cover legal issues, customer and employee health and welfare, and/or ethical concerns during a pandemic. Pandemic procedures identify individual tasks and completion of core responsibilities as daily operations are adjusted to adhere to pandemic-related guidelines in order to maintain the health and safety of employees and customers. Pandemic policies and procedures are critical to identify how employees will perform tasks during a pandemic and how employees will communicate these adjusted services and protocols to customers. Most importantly, pandemic policies and procedures are designed to help your company operate as efficiently and safely as possible under disruptive conditions.

MORE TIPS TO HELP YOUR COMPANY DURING A PANDEMIC

Once your company has established pandemic policies and procedures to follow in order to provide your customers with essential services, like propane deliveries and emergency service, the next step is to consider measures that you can take to productively prepare for the next phase. Depending on your company's needs, this may include creative ways to stay in touch with your customers or prep your service team with skills to increase billable hours, including:

- **Pandemic Communications**
In times of uncertainty, your customers are counting on you to keep them informed. Contact your customer

base with messages of support, so that they know you are still available to them during these uncertain times. This serves to ensure that their immediate needs for fuel delivery or service can be met, and will also help to maintain customer relationships while "normal" operations are on pause.

- **Social Distancing Service**

What services can your company provide while following pandemic guidelines, like social distancing? Cathodic protection inspections are a seasonal service that can be performed with minimal customer contact and still generate revenue through billable hours.

- **Go Paperless**

Help maintain social distancing between employees by using electronic forms rather than passing in paper safety inspections and related documentation in person.

- **Remote Training**

While in-person training is on hold, remote learning is a great way to help your service team members continue to develop their skills and help your company stay compliant with employee training requirements.

We hope that this information can be a useful resource to help your propane company maintain compliance during these challenging circumstances. **In order to extend our support, P3 Propane Safety is providing a free COVID-19 pandemic policy and procedure to propane marketers. Contact us to connect with a propane safety expert to receive a complimentary customized pandemic policy and procedure for your company.**

Eric H. Leskinen, executive vice president of P3 Propane Safety, has over 30 years of experience with career progression from field operations to corporate direction. He has designed, managed, and executed safety training and compliance programs for multi-state companies with up to 1100 employees.