

Training requirements, recommendations for 2024

Selling a staple like propane introduces significant responsibilities when it comes to the safety of your customers and employees.

The best way to promote safety at your propane company is to ensure your training meets or exceeds minimum requirements set by federal, state and local jurisdictions. Let's review the required and recommended safety training that will help keep your company in compliance and reduce regulatory risk.



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► REQUIRED TRAINING

• **Certified Employee Training Program (CETP) required for licensing in certain states:** The 2024 National Propane Education & Training Conference in February unveiled updates regarding the ways CETP training will change next year. But for now, there are two types of CETP training: initial and refresher. Initial training includes both new and seasonal employees, as well as seasoned employees who want to expand their career with additional education.

• **Hazardous materials handling (HAZMAT) required by the Department of Transportation (DOT):** New employees must be fully trained on DOT HAZMAT requirements within 90 days of employment and before they're working on their own. Existing employees must complete recurrent safety training every three years or when a job function changes. Marketers should plan on this course taking up to one day, track who attends the training and ensure that it is completed according to guidelines.

► JOB-SPECIFIC TRAINING

Job-specific training allows for customized training based on what an individual may be doing, such as DOT cylinder requalification, crane training, monthly meter creep tests, loading bob-tails and cathodic testing. This type of training is critical for your employees, all of whom have differing responsibilities that must be carried out properly for the safety of the customer, employee and company.

• **Cathodic testing:** Every underground propane storage container should be thoroughly inspected for proper cathodic protection, as leaks are hard to detect and can cause huge insurance issues. For this reason, insurance brokers can go out of their way to ensure that cathodic training and inspections are being upheld per National Fire Protection Association requirements.

• **Crane training:** Not to be confused with a hoisting license, this training shares important safety information with employees such as safety features, operating procedures, rigging materials and load chart deciphering.

► RECOMMENDED TRAINING

• **Hands-on field training:** Most drivers and technicians learn best by doing – not by seeing or hearing. Let's face it: Many propane employees don't love to raise their hand and admit they don't understand something, and many managers don't have the knowledge to identify mistakes from the reporting alone. The combination of those issues alongside the trend to move propane training online means employees may be doing something incorrectly for years without

knowing there's a problem. Spending time in the field with a professional safety trainer fosters an environment in which mistakes and issues present themselves. As the trainer develops rapport with the field team, they start to let their guard down and feel more comfortable asking questions about work they've just learned how to do or have performed regularly for years.

• **Driver ride-along training:** Audit your team's delivery routines, unsafe condition reports, service work, tank sets, PPE usage and adherence to company policies and procedures – all without downtime. Driver ride-along training allows safety experts to ride along in the bobtail of a working driver or technician and analyze their performance, creating a detailed performance log and future training schedule.

► FROM THE FIELD

On a ride-along with a client in the mid-Atlantic, I was surprised to find that the technician did not know how to properly perform a leak check using a 300-pound block gauge. This information allowed me to coach this technician, who had been in the field for six years and never had proper training to use a block gauge. My coaching was positively received and appreciated.

In another ride-along, I spent a day with a delivery driver in the mid-Atlantic. We went through her entire day: pre-trip inspection, loading the truck, making deliveries, performing leak checks and her end-of-day routine and post-trip inspection. My supervision and feedback helped to reinforce these positive behaviors, and let her know everything she was doing right. **LPG**

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