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P3 Propane Safety

Propane Safety Blind Spots

Key areas your training may overlook

One of the biggest and most important responsibilities of the propane marketer is proper safety training for all team members. Initial and recurring training at your propane business will always be a crucial step to maintaining a business that can operate safely and sufficiently, no matter what outside factors might be at play.

Keep in mind that safety training doesn't end with basic certifications or commercial driver's licenses (CDLs). In fact, safety training and company-wide communication is essential to maintain compliance with the U.S. Dept. of Transportation (DOT), U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) and State regulatory requirements. That's why propane safety experts recommend that propane companies outsource their training to a full-time compliance expert who is familiar and comfortable with Federal guidelines, as well as requirements in your jurisdiction.

We recognize that sometimes the hardest part of meeting safety requirements could be knowing where to begin. We'll cover several commonly overlooked training requirements that will help keep your propane company in compliance and reduce regulatory risk at your establishment.

✓ **Cathodic Protection Testing:** The National Fire Protection Agency requires routine cathodic testing requirements for underground propane tanks from 2011 and newer. Every underground propane storage container should be thoroughly inspected for proper cathodic protection.

✓ **Hands-On Field Training:** This provides a unique opportunity for a trainer to visit a company's location and build rapport with the field team. After all, education in a hands-on environment is how most tradespeople learn best. Field training is highly recommended to help ensure that the message sticks.

✓ **HAZMAT:** The DOT requires Hazardous Materials Handling (HAZMAT) training within 90 days of employment, and before new employees are out working on their own. Existing employees must complete recurrent safety training every three years or when a job function changes.

✓ **Driver Ride-Along Training:** This 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. Best of all, driver

ride-along training can be done during regular daily operations—no downtime required.

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

✓ **Job-Specific Training:** This allows for customized training based on what an individual may or may not be doing, such as DOT cylinder requalification, crane training, monthly meter creep tests, loading bobbills and cathodic testing.

Planning a Roadmap to Safety & Compliance

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. However, it can be hard to know where to begin.

For this reason, many propane companies seek out a compliance assessment, which is an on-site analysis of documentation and business practices. This simulates a DOT inspection while allowing you the opportunity to get your files and training in order by knowing the top priorities.

Working with an external compliance expert will allow you to provide top-notch safety training and consulting for just a fraction of the cost of employing an in-house team member. The top safety experts are knowledgeable in requirements nationwide, so you can remain confident that information shared will be applicable to your location. **ICM**

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