



Paul Craver
P3 Propane Safety

Breaking Down the Interruption of Service Process

Three tips to prepare your business

More orders and gallons delivered during the Fall and Winter seasons means potentially more interruption of service situations. These situations, such as out-of-gas calls, are an unavoidable part of running a propane company during the Winter months. Evaluate your protocol for interruption of service calls now to set your team up for success to respond to them in a quick, safe and efficient manner. Doing so helps ensure your company is prepared and protected through the busiest time of the year.

Key Essentials for Interruption of Service Call

1. Policies & Procedures

A written *Policies & Procedures Manual* will help your company operate efficiently and avoid unnecessary risk. Written policies and procedures will guide your team during an interruption of service response and make handling these potentially dangerous situations much safer and easier to execute. Ensure your interruption of service section in your *Policies & Procedures Manual* covers the following:

- A written script for customer service representatives to use when answering interruption of service calls from customers.

- A plan for how to handle interruption of service situations outside regular business hours.
- A procedure for your drivers to follow when responding to an interruption of service call, including whether they complete the leak check before or after fuel is added, and if they lock out the tank if the leak check fails.

Having a written *Policies & Procedures Manual* is an industry best practice; a specific policy and procedure for interruption of service calls can keep your employees and customers safe as well as protect your company in the event of litigation.

2. Employee Training

From the first phone call to reactivating service, every step needs to be performed correctly to protect customers, employees and your company. All relevant personnel need proper training to perform their responsibilities during an interruption of service call appropriately. Customer service representatives, drivers and service technicians need to understand how to complete the procedures in your *Policies & Procedures Manual*, perform those responsibilities accordingly, and properly and thoroughly document the response to the interruption of service situation in the field.

3. Proper Documentation

Your team should always document interruption of service responses clearly and store that documentation for your records. In the event of litigation, that documentation serves as legal protection for you. Having easily accessible digital documentation with photos is the best way to protect your company. Half of all propane accidents in this industry are the result of homeowners modifying their equipment themselves. Documentation of every customer location's service history and photo documentation of container sets will protect your company during an interruption of service situation caused by homeowner modifications.

Be Prepared

These key elements are recommended, not only for safety, but also for efficiency. Having a streamlined interruption of service protocol in place can help your staff address, respond to and resolve these situations safely and efficiently. **ICM**

Paul Craver is the Senior Consultant of Safety & Training at P3 Propane Safety. You can reach him at Paul_Craver@p3propanesafety.com or P3Propane.com.

