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Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Propane Safety During Winter Storms

Steps to keep you and your family safe

Albany, NY – December 9, 2010 – As many homeowners across the Northeast have seen this week, winter is now here and New Yorkers need to be prepared for heavy snowfalls and frigid temperatures.

"It is so important that homeowners are careful when clearing snow and ice from roofs, chimneys, appliance vents, and areas near fuel tanks and lines," says Barbara Roach, executive director of the New York Propane Gas Association (NYPGA). "Shoveling a clear pathway to fuel tanks helps ensure that deliveries can be made without interruption," she added. "But special care should be taken when working around fuel supply tanks and propane gas lines to avoid damage that could result in a leak."

NYPGA reminds everyone, even the most seasoned propane users, to review propane hazards and safety tips regularly.

When handled properly, propane is a safe, clean, versatile and highly efficient fuel that can be used for many consumer products. If your home or business uses propane to generate heat or run appliances, there are a few simple steps you can take to keep your family safe and avoid potential dangers:

- **Mark the location of your tank with a flag, pole, or stake.** The marker should be higher than the average snow cover depth for your location. It will help you avoid plowing or shoveling rooftop snow on top of your tank. Should your tank become covered with snow, use a broom to clear it.
- **Make sure you have an adequate propane supply.** During and after a winter storm, roads may be inaccessible for delivery. It is recommended that you establish a regular delivery schedule with your propane retailer.
- **Check your chimneys, flue pipes, vent connectors, and propane tank for damage, blockage, or debris caused by snow and ice.** Use a broom rather than a shovel, and clear these areas frequently. This will help reduce the possibility of carbon monoxide poisoning due to blocked or damaged chimneys, flues, and vents.

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- **Never use a stove for space heating and never use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas, particularly in the event of a power outage.** Proper ventilation is necessary for their safe operation; and carbon monoxide fumes emitted can be lethal. Only use appliances indoors that are designed and approved for indoor use. Never store, place, or use a propane cylinder indoors or in enclosed areas.
- **Make sure your heating system and appliances are running efficiently.** Have a qualified service technician annually inspect and service your appliances and propane system. This will ensure that your appliances are running as efficiently as possible, conserving fuel and saving dollars.
- **After a winter storm passes and it is safe to do so, check the entire area for downed power lines, damaged gas lines, or damage to your propane tank.** Immediately call your local utility company or propane retailer if any of these hazards exist. Do not attempt repairs yourself.
- **Use extreme caution when operating portable generators.** Never use a portable generator (gasoline, diesel, or propane) indoors or in enclosed areas. This can result in carbon monoxide poisoning or death.
- **Take immediate action if you smell gas inside or outside of your home or business.** Follow these simple instructions:

    1. **No flames or sparks!** Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate or turn on or off lights, appliances, telephones or cell phones.
    2. **Leave the area immediately!** Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.
    3. **Shut off the gas.** Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank, if it is safe to do so. To close the valve, turn it to the right (clockwise).
    4. **Report the leak.** From a neighbor's home or other building away from the gas leak, call your propane retailer right away. If you can't reach your propane retailer, call 911 or your local fire department.
    5. Do not return to the building or area until your propane retailer, emergency responder, or qualified service technician determines that it is safe to do so.
    6. **Get your system checked.** Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane retailer or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak-free.

    Propane users can find more safety tips online www.nypropane.com and www.propanesafety.com.

About the New York Propane Gas Association (NYPGA)

NYPGA is a member-focused trade organization providing services that communicate, educate, and promote the propane industry in New York. The association was formed in 1948 to offer opportunities for training and networking with peers, and to aid with legislative issues that contribute to operating a safe and successful industry.

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