TECH SHEET

Out of Gas Procedure

According to the Propane Education & Research Council, nearly half of all liquefied petroleum dealers' liability claims are caused by the failure to inspect and perform leak tests on systems, often following an "out of gas" call. An effective "out of gas" procedure can help LP dealers reduce their liability exposure and reduce the risk of injury to customers.

Training

Dealers should train all employees, whether delivery or office personnel, on their organization's "out of gas" procedures. When an "out of gas" condition is reported, the training program should ensure that:

- Office personnel receiving the call can recognize the associated hazards and prioritize the service request.
- Delivery personnel who encounter tanks with no pressure know how to properly test and verify the system's integrity before making the system fully operational.

"Out of Gas" Call

Treat customers that are "out of gas" as a priority service call. Since many customers are on "keep full" agreements, an "out of gas" condition is not expected and may indicate a leak or other system problem.

- Instruct customers reporting an "out of gas" condition to close the main supply valve on their tank. If the customer is unaware of any reason the system is in an "out of gas" condition, complete a leak report. See EMC's Tech Sheet "Gas Leak Response Procedure" for a sample leak report.
- Make arrangements for the customer to be home with the entire system accessible for leak testing and visual inspection.
- Inform customer that gas will not be introduced into the system until a qualified technician can perform the test.

"Out of Gas" Discovered During Delivery

When a customer's tank is discovered to be "out of gas" (5% full or less), determine the cause before refueling of the system. Possible causes may include leaks, failure of the gas shutoff valves, disconnected appliances or systems that may have been otherwise altered by the customer.

Follow these procedures upon discovery of an "out of gas" situation:

- If no one is home when delivery is attempted or the entire system and all the appliances are not accessible, turn off the gas supply. Tag the system with a National Propane Gas Association's "No One Home" tag or equivalent to warn the customer against turning the fuel valve back on.

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- Contact the customer and leave notice to schedule a leak test and any other needed service with a qualified technician.

- Make arrangements to return when the customer is home and the entire system is accessible for leak testing and visual inspection. Inform the customer that gas will not be introduced into the system until a qualified technician performs these tests and determines the cause of the "out of gas" condition.

- Upon arriving at the customer's location, verify the tank or cylinder and all appliance valves are closed and no lines are open or disconnected. Always determine by visual inspection.

- Fill the tank or replace the empty cylinders and turn on the main supply valve. Complete a visual inspection of the entire system and perform a leak test with a gas meter, pressure gauge or manometer in accordance with The National Fuel Gas Code, (NFPA 54®). Record the leak test results.

- Upon acceptable results from the leak test and visual inspection, place all appliances and equipment back into service. Make sure that all pilot lights are operating properly and check any automatic controls to verify they are operating properly.

- Relight pilot lights and ensure appliances and system are operating properly and are leak free.

- Document each step of this procedure and maintain in the customer's file for as long as they are retained and five years thereafter.

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For Additional Information

National Propane Gas Association: www.npga.org

Propane Education & Research Council:
www.propanecouncil.org

EMC Insurance Companies: www.emcins.com
- Safety by Industry – Petroleum Marketers