

# PROPANE REGULATORY ASSISTANCE GUIDE

Propane Compliance Information for the state of Iowa

## PROPANE TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE, HANDLING, AND USE

This fact sheet summarizes, in brief form, the compliance requirements for transportation, storage, handling and use of propane. It is not intended to provide comprehensive guidance on regulatory compliance for those dealing with propane, but to highlight those requirements and to assist those who may be affected by the various requirements to obtain detailed information when needed. Information about requirements which apply to the use of propane as a motor fuel is not included.

Propane is a liquefied petroleum gas under pressure, derived from natural gas during processing or petroleum during refining. It is widely used as a fuel in a variety of applications, including the following:

- heating homes and businesses, especially in small towns and rural areas
- fueling appliances
- heating barns and other farm buildings
- drying grain
- fueling machinery used indoors
- fueling backyard grills
- fueling motor vehicles

Propane is the most common form of liquefied petroleum gas (LP-gas) in use in Iowa. Transportation, storage, handling, and use of propane are subject to regulation by various state, federal and local agencies. Propane is classified as a hazardous material, a classification which triggers applicability of various regulations.

### Transportation

Much of the initial transport of propane is through pipelines from natural gas processing plants and oil refineries to distribution terminals. Construction of pipelines to transport hazardous liquids, including propane, requires permits issued by the Iowa Utilities Board. Note that piping from containers at homes, farms or businesses is not regulated by the Board unless part of a utility operation. Further information may be obtained from:

Safety and Engineering Section  
Iowa Utilities Board  
515.281.5546  
Don.Stursma@iub.iowa.gov

### Pipeline Safety Requirements

Safety requirements for pipelines transporting propane are established by the United States Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Office of Pipeline Safety. These requirements apply to “jurisdictional” piping systems, which includes:

- any system which serves more than one customer and is in or includes a “public place,” which is a location available to the general public, or
- any system which serves 10 or more customers, regardless of the location

Visit [www.phmsa.dot.gov/pipeline/regs/ntsb](http://www.phmsa.dot.gov/pipeline/regs/ntsb) for more information on what piping systems are subject to Office of Pipeline Safety requirements.

### Other Transport Safety Requirements

After arrival at a distribution terminal, propane is transported to bulk plants by railroad tank car, transport truck, barge or tanker ship. Shipment by rail is subject to requirements enforced by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration and those by truck are under the United States Department of Transportation, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Office of Hazardous Materials Safety. Transport of propane by navigable waterways is subject to regulations established by the United States Coast Guard, Hazardous Materials Standards Division. For more information about transport regulations visit:

[www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov) for federal railway regulations.

[www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mso/hms.htm](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/g-m/mso/hms.htm) for federal waterway regulations.

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In Iowa, roadway regulations are enforced primarily by the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Motor Vehicle Enforcement and by the Iowa State Patrol. Please contact Dean House at the Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Motor Vehicle enforcement, Hazardous Materials Unit for more information on permitting, placarding, use of specific containers, plus training and licensing for drivers.

Dean House  
dean.house@dot.iowa.gov  
515.237.3278  
www.iamvd.com/omve/hazmat.htm

## Storage

Requirements for storage of propane are established by the State Fire Marshal. These requirements are based upon national standards established by the International Code Council, the National Fire Protection Association and the United States Department of Transportation. For further information about requirements for storing propane contact:

Flammable Liquids Section  
Fire Marshal Division  
Iowa Department of Public Safety  
515.725.6145  
fminfo@dps.state.ia.us  
www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/inspection/flammable/index.shtml

## Dispensing

When propane is delivered by a distributor to a retail installation, the meter which measures the volume of the product being provided is required to meet specifications established the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. For more information, contact:

Weights and Measures Bureau  
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship  
515.725.1492  
darryl.brown@iowaagriculture.gov

The State Fire Marshal requires that, when a customer's container is empty or when there has been an interruption of service, that the container valve be shut off. At the time propane service is restored the system must be tested for leakage. If leakage is indicated, the service shall remain turned off until necessary repairs have been made. Contact information is listed under "Storage" at left.

## Installation and Repair

Anyone who installs or repairs propane piping or storage containers is required to be trained to standards established by the State Fire Marshal. Piping, which installed or repaired, is required to be pressure tested before being put into service. Plans must be submitted to the State Fire Marshal for any installation of fixed propane storage containers, when any individual container has a capacity in excess of 2,000 gallons or if the total storage capacity at the site for propane is in excess of 4,000 gallons. Approval of the Fire Marshal is required prior to construction or installation. Contact information is listed under "Storage" at left.

Note also that local jurisdictions may require approval prior to the installation of propane storage containers and may impose additional requirements beyond those established by the State Fire Marshal. Contact the local fire department serving the area in which the container or containers will be located for information about any local requirements.

Persons who install or repair propane piping may be required to register as contractors with the Labor Services Division, Iowa Workforce Development. Additional information is available at:

Contractor Registration  
Labor Service Division  
Iowa Workforce Development  
registration@iwd.iowa.gov  
515.242.5871 or  
1.800.562.4692 (toll free)  
www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/contractor.htm



## Damage and Reporting

Any person who damages propane storage containers or piping is required to notify the local fire department and the occupant or owner of the property on which the piping or installation is located.

Any damage to propane containers or lines which may result in a hazardous condition is required to be reported to the:

Emergency Response Unit  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
515.281.8694  
[emergency.response@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:emergency.response@dnr.iowa.gov)

## Inventory Reporting

Propane is classified as a hazardous substance. Anyone who stores in excess of 10,000 pounds of propane at any one time is subject to inventory reporting requirements under the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA). "Tier 2" reporting under EPCRA in Iowa recently became the responsibility of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

For further information, contact:

Iowa EPCRA Coordinator  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
515.725.0302  
[iowa.epcra@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:iowa.epcra@dnr.iowa.gov)  
[www.iowadnr.gov/epcra/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/epcra/)

Persons or businesses storing 60,000 pounds or more of propane at one time are required to register with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As of January 2008, the application of this requirement to certain farming operations has been suspended. Go to the Department of Homeland Security Web site at [www.dhs.gov/chemicalsecurity](http://www.dhs.gov/chemicalsecurity) for further information about these requirements and who is exempt.

## Propane in the Workplace

The safe storage, handling and use of propane in the workplace is subject to occupational safety and health regulations administered by the Labor Service Division of Iowa Workplace Development. Workplaces in which propane is present are required to post and make available to their workers a material safety data sheet outlining the characteristics, hazards and appropriate response to incidents of various types involving propane. For further information about applicable occupational safety and health requirements, contact:

IOSH Consultation & Education  
Suzanne Hutton  
515.281.7629  
[suzanne.hutton@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:suzanne.hutton@iwd.iowa.gov)  
[www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/iosh/consultation/index.htm](http://www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/iosh/consultation/index.htm)

## Emergency Response

Any propane leak, particularly a leak which results in a concentration of the substance rather than its immediate release into the atmosphere, must be treated as an emergency situation. Anyone in proximity to the location should be notified and evacuated and the local fire department should be contacted immediately. A qualified installer should be contacted to repair the leak and ensure that any resulting concentration of propane which poses a hazard of fire or explosion is dissipated.



200 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1819 U.S.A.

International: +1.515.725.3100  
Domestic: 1.800.245.4692



## Iowa Business and Regulatory Network

The Iowa Business and Regulatory Network includes regulatory and business assistance coordinators from Iowa's regulatory agencies. These individuals are available to provide advice and assistance to anyone seeking information about regulatory compliance requirements of their individual agencies and to make referrals to other agencies whose regulations may also apply. See <http://www.regassist.gov> for a more complete description of the Network and its services.

### State Regulatory Assistance Contacts

#### Iowa Department of Public Safety (IDPS)

Mike Coveyou  
515.725.6185      [regassist@dps.state.ia.us](mailto:regassist@dps.state.ia.us)  
[www.dps.state.ia.us/regassist/index.shtml](http://www.dps.state.ia.us/regassist/index.shtml)

#### Iowa Utilities Board (IUB)

Joan Conrad  
515.281.4874      [joan.conrad@iub.iowa.gov](mailto:joan.conrad@iub.iowa.gov)  
[www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/links/business\\_regulatory.html](http://www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/links/business_regulatory.html)

#### Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT)

Karen Smith  
515.237.3239      [karen.smith@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:karen.smith@dot.iowa.gov)  
[www.dot.state.ia.us/bus\\_reg\\_assist.htm](http://www.dot.state.ia.us/bus_reg_assist.htm)

#### Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)

Margaret Thomson  
515.281.5322      [margaret.thomson@iowaagriculture.gov](mailto:margaret.thomson@iowaagriculture.gov)  
[www.agriculture.state.ia.us/emailcontact/index.asp](http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/emailcontact/index.asp)

#### Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

Christine Spackman  
515.281.7276      [Christine.Spackman@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Christine.Spackman@dnr.iowa.gov)  
[www.iowadnr.gov/other/bizreg.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/other/bizreg.html)

#### Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), Labor Services Division

Kathleen Uehling  
515.281.5915      [kathleen.uehling@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:kathleen.uehling@iwd.iowa.gov)

#### Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED)

Sherry Timmins  
515.494.4594      [sherry.timmins@iowa.gov](mailto:sherry.timmins@iowa.gov)  
<http://regassist.iowa.gov/>

For more information on the Regulatory Assistance Team, contact the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED)  
1.800.245.IOWA      +1.515.725.3100      [www.iowalifechanging.com](http://www.iowalifechanging.com)