Right to Know
Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet

Common Name: **PROPANE**

Synonyms: Dimethylmethane; Propyl Hydride
Chemical Name: Propane
Date: May 2010   Revision: June 2015

### Description and Use

Propane is a colorless, odorless gas when pure or it may have a faint petroleum-like odor. It is usually shipped as a liquefied gas with a foul-smelling odorant added, and is used as a fuel, refrigerant, solvent and aerosol propellant.

- **ODOR THRESHOLD = 20,000 ppm**
- Odor thresholds vary greatly. Do not rely on odor alone to determine potentially hazardous exposures.

### Reasons for Citation

- **Propane** is on the Right to Know Hazardous Substance List because it is cited by OSHA, ACGIH, DOT, NIOSH, DEP, NFPA, and EPA.
- This chemical is on the Special Health Hazard Substance List.

### Hazard Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health</th>
<th>NJDHSS</th>
<th>NFPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLAMMABILITY</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REACTIVITY</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FLAMMABLE POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE**

Hazard Rating Key: 0=Minimal; 1=slight; 2=moderate; 3=serious; 4=severe

- **Propane** can affect you when inhaled.
- Contact with *liquefied Propane* may cause frostbite.
- Exposure to high concentrations of **Propane** can decrease the amount of **Oxygen** in the air and cause suffocation with symptoms of headache, dizziness, lightheadedness and passing out.
- **Propane** is a FLAMMABLE GAS and a DANGEROUS FIRE HAZARD.

### Workplace Exposure Limits

**OSHA:** The legal airborne permissible exposure limit (PEL) is 1,000 ppm averaged over an 8-hour workshift.

**NIOSH:** The recommended airborne exposure limit (REL) is 1,000 ppm averaged over a 10-hour workshift.

**ACGIH:** The threshold limit value (TLV) is 1,000 ppm averaged over an 8-hour workshift.

- **Propane** decreases the amount of available **Oxygen**. Routinely measure **Oxygen** content to make sure it is at least 19.5% by volume.

### Emergency Responders

SEE GLOSSARY ON PAGE 5.

### First Aid

**Eye Contact**
- Immediately flush with large amounts of water for at least 15 minutes, lifting upper and lower lids. Remove contact lenses, if worn, while flushing. Seek medical attention.

**Skin Contact**
- Immerse affected part in warm water. Seek medical attention.

**Inhalation**
- Remove the person from exposure.
- Begin rescue breathing (using universal precautions) if breathing has stopped and CPR if heart action has stopped.
- Transfer promptly to a medical facility.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
CHEMTREC: 1-800-424-9300
NJDEP Hotline: 1-877-927-6337
National Response Center: 1-800-424-8802
Determining Your Exposure

- Read the product manufacturer’s Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and the label to determine product ingredients and important safety and health information about the product mixture.

- For each individual hazardous ingredient, read the New Jersey Department of Health Hazardous Substance Fact Sheet, available on the RTK website (http://nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/right-to-know) or in your facility’s RTK Central File or Hazard Communication Standard file.

- You have a right to this information under the New Jersey Worker and Community Right to Know Act and the Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) Act if you are a public worker in New Jersey, and under the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) if you are a private worker.

- The New Jersey Right to Know Act requires most employers to label chemicals in the workplace and requires public employers to provide their employees with information concerning chemical hazards and controls. The federal OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200) and the PEOSH Hazard Communication Standard (N.J.A.C. 12:100-7) require employers to provide similar information and training to their employees.

This Fact Sheet is a summary of available information regarding the health hazards that may result from exposure. Duration of exposure, concentration of the substance and other factors will affect your susceptibility to any of the potential effects described below.

Health Hazard Information

Acute Health Effects
The following acute (short-term) health effects may occur immediately or shortly after exposure to Propane:

- Contact with liquefied Propane may cause frostbite.
- Exposure to high concentrations of Propane can decrease the amount of Oxygen in the air and cause suffocation with symptoms of headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, loss of coordination and judgment, passing out and even death.

Chronic Health Effects
The following chronic (long-term) health effects can occur at some time after exposure to Propane and can last for months or years:

Cancer Hazard
- According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health, Propane has not been tested for its ability to cause cancer in animals.

Reproductive Hazard
- According to the information presently available to the New Jersey Department of Health, Propane has not been tested for its ability to affect reproduction.

Other Effects
- No chronic (long-term) health effects are known at this time.

Medical

Medical Testing
There is no special test for this chemical. However, seek medical attention if illness occurs or overexposure is suspected.

Any evaluation should include a careful history of past and present symptoms with an exam. Medical tests that look for damage already done are not a substitute for controlling exposure.

Request copies of your medical testing. You have a legal right to this information under the OSHA Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records Standard (29 CFR 1910.1020).
Gloves and Clothing

Gloves and Clothing not apply to every situation. Employers must determine the appropriate personal protective equipment for each hazard and train employees on how and when to use protective equipment. Employers must consult the NIOSH document on Control of Exposure to Skin and Eye Irritants at [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ctrlbanding/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ctrlbanding/).

The following work practices are also recommended:

- Label process containers.
- Provide employees with hazard information and training.
- Monitor airborne chemical concentrations.
- Use engineering controls if concentrations exceed recommended exposure levels.
- Provide eye wash fountains and emergency showers.
- Wash or shower if skin comes in contact with a hazardous material.
- Always wash at the end of the workshift.
- Change into clean clothing if clothing becomes contaminated.
- Do not take contaminated clothing home.
- Get special training to wash contaminated clothing.
- Do not eat, smoke, or drink in areas where chemicals are being handled, processed or stored.
- Wash hands carefully before eating, smoking, drinking, applying cosmetics or using the toilet.

In addition, the following may be useful or required:

- Before entering a confined space where Propane is present, check to make sure sufficient Oxygen (19.5%) exists.
- Before entering a confined space where Propane may be present, check to make sure that an explosive concentration does not exist.

### Personal Protective Equipment

The OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Standard (29 CFR 1910.132) requires employers to determine the appropriate personal protective equipment for each hazard and to train employees on how and when to use protective equipment.

The following recommendations are only guidelines and may not apply to every situation.

#### Gloves and Clothing

- Avoid skin contact with Propane. Wear personal protective equipment made from material which can not be permeated or degraded by this substance. Safety equipment suppliers and manufacturers can provide recommendations on the most protective glove and clothing material for your operation.
- Safety equipment manufacturers recommend Nitrile and Neoprene for gloves, and Tychem® Responder®, or the equivalent, as a protective material for clothing. Use turn out gear or flash protection if ignition/fire is the greatest hazard.
- Where exposure to cold equipment, vapors, or liquid may occur, employees should be provided with insulated gloves and special clothing designed to prevent the freezing of body tissues.
- All protective clothing (suits, gloves, footwear, headgear) should be clean, available each day, and put on before work.

### Eye Protection

- Wear non-vented, impact resistant goggles when working with fumes, gases, or vapors.
- If additional protection is needed for the entire face, use in combination with a face shield. A face shield should not be used without another type of eye protection.

### Respiratory Protection

**Improper use of respirators is dangerous.** Respirators should only be used if the employer has implemented a written program that takes into account workplace conditions, requirements for worker training, respirator fit testing, and medical exams, as described in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134).

- Where the potential exists for exposure over 1,000 ppm, use a NIOSH approved supplied-air respirator with a full facepiece operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode. For increased protection use in combination with an auxiliary self-contained breathing apparatus or an emergency escape air cylinder.
- Exposure to 2,100 ppm is immediately dangerous to life and health. If the possibility of exposure above 2,100 ppm exists, use a NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in a pressure-demand or other positive-pressure mode equipped with an emergency escape air cylinder.
- Exposure to Propane is dangerous because it can replace Oxygen and lead to suffocation. Only a NIOSH approved self-contained breathing apparatus with a full facepiece operated in the positive pressure mode should be used in Oxygen deficient environments.

### Fire Hazards

If employees are expected to fight fires, they must be trained and equipped as stated in the OSHA Fire Brigades Standard (29 CFR 1910.156).

- **Propane** is a FLAMMABLE GAS.
- Stop flow of gas and use water spray to disperse vapors.
- POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE.
- CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE.
- Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.
- Vapor is heavier than air and may travel a distance to cause a fire or explosion far from the source or flash back.
- Flow, agitation, low humidity and other factors may generate electrostatic charges resulting in fire and/or explosion.
- **Propane** may form an ignitable vapor/air mixture in closed tanks or containers.
Spills and Emergencies
If employees are required to clean-up spills, they must be properly trained and equipped. The OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (29 CFR 1910.120) may apply.

If Propane is leaked, take the following steps:

- Evacuate personnel and secure and control entrance to the area.
- Eliminate ignition sources.
- Ventilate area of leak to disperse the gas.
- Stop flow of gas. If source of leak is a cylinder and the leak cannot be stopped in place, remove the leaking cylinder to a safe place in the open air, and repair leak or allow cylinder to empty.
- Conduct air monitoring to determine that Oxygen levels are above 19.5% and the Lower Explosive Limit (LEL) is not being exceeded.
- Propane may “pool” or “settle” in low areas and may remain in a fixed location for a long period of time.
- Keep Propane out of confined spaces, such as sewers, because of the possibility of an explosion.
- Turn leaking cylinder with leak up to prevent escape of gas in liquid state.
- It may be necessary to contain and dispose of Propane as a HAZARDOUS WASTE. Contact your state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or your regional office of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for specific recommendations.

Handling and Storage
Prior to working with Propane you should be trained on its proper handling and storage.

- Propane may react violently with CHLORINE DIOXIDE and other OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE).
- Store in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area away from COMBUSTIBLES.
- Sources of ignition, such as smoking and open flames, are prohibited where Propane is used, handled, or stored.
- Metal containers involving the transfer of Propane should be grounded and bonded.
- Use explosion-proof electrical equipment and fittings wherever Propane is used, handled, manufactured, or stored.
- Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of Propane.
- Propane may accumulate static electricity when being filled into properly grounded containers.

Occupational Health Information Resources
The New Jersey Department of Health and Occupational Health Service, offers multiple services in occupational health. These services include providing informational resources, educational materials, public presentations, and industrial hygiene and medical investigations and evaluations.

For more information, please contact:

New Jersey Department of Health
Right to Know
PO Box 368
Trenton, NJ 08625-0368
Phone: 609-984-2202
Fax: 609-984-7407
E-mail: rtk@doh.nj.gov
Web address:
http://nj.gov/health/workplacehealthandsafety/right-to-know

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Glossary

ACGIH is the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. They publish guidelines called Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) for exposure to workplace chemicals.

Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGs) are established by the EPA. They describe the risk to humans resulting from once-in-a-lifetime, or rare, exposure to airborne chemicals.

Boiling point is the temperature at which a substance can change its physical state from a liquid to a gas.

A carcinogen is a substance that causes cancer.

The CAS number is unique, identifying number, assigned by the Chemical Abstracts Service, to a specific chemical.

CFR is the Code of Federal Regulations, which are the regulations of the United States government.

A combustible substance is a solid, liquid or gas that will burn.

A corrosive substance is a gas, liquid or solid that causes destruction of human skin or severe corrosion of containers.

The critical temperature is the temperature above which a gas cannot be liquefied, regardless of the pressure applied.

DEP is the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

DOT is the Department of Transportation, the federal agency that regulates the transportation of chemicals.

EPA is the Environmental Protection Agency, the federal agency responsible for regulating environmental hazards.

ERG is the Emergency Response Guidebook. It is a guide for emergency responders for transportation emergencies involving hazardous substances.

Emergency Response Planning Guideline (ERPG) values provide estimates of concentration ranges where one reasonably might anticipate observing adverse effects.

A fetus is an unborn human or animal.

A flammable substance is a solid, liquid, vapor or gas that will ignite easily and burn rapidly.

The flash point is the temperature at which a liquid or solid gives off vapor that can form a flammable mixture with air.

IARC is the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a scientific group.

Ionization Potential is the amount of energy needed to remove an electron from an atom or molecule. It is measured in electron volts.

IRIS is the Integrated Risk Information System database on human health effects that may result from exposure to various chemicals, maintained by federal EPA.

LEL or Lower Explosive Limit, is the lowest concentration of a combustible substance (gas or vapor) in the air capable of continuing an explosion.

mg/m³ means milligrams of a chemical in a cubic meter of air. It is a measure of concentration (weight/volume).

A mutagen is a substance that causes mutations. A mutation is a change in the genetic material in a body cell. Mutations can lead to birth defects, miscarriages, or cancer.

NFPA is the National Fire Protection Association. It classifies substances according to their fire and explosion hazard.

NIOSH is the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. It tests equipment, evaluates and approves respirators, conducts studies of workplace hazards, and proposes standards to OSHA.

NIOSH is the National Toxicology Program which tests chemicals and reviews evidence for cancer.

OSHA is the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards.

PEOSHA is the New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act, which adopts and enforces health and safety standards in public workplaces.

Permeated is the movement of chemicals through protective materials.

ppm means parts of a substance per million parts of air. It is a measure of concentration by volume in air.

Protective Action Criteria (PAC) are values established by the Department of Energy and are based on AEGs and ERPGs. They are used for emergency planning of chemical release events.

A reactive substance is a solid, liquid or gas that releases energy under certain conditions.

STEL is a Short Term Exposure Limit which is usually a 15-minute exposure that should not be exceeded at any time during a work day.

A teratogen is a substance that causes birth defects by damaging the fetus.

UEL or Upper Explosive Limit is the highest concentration in air above which there is too much fuel (gas or vapor) to begin a reaction or explosion.

Vapor Density is the ratio of the weight of a given volume of one gas to the weight of another (usually Air), at the same temperature and pressure.

The vapor pressure is a force exerted by the vapor in equilibrium with the solid or liquid phase of the same substance. The higher the vapor pressure the higher concentration of the substance in air.
**Common Name:** PROPANE  
**Synonyms:** Dimethylmethane; Propyl Hydride  
**CAS No:** 74-98-6  
**Molecular Formula:** C₃H₈  
**RTK Substance No:** 1594  
**Description:** Colorless, odorless gas when pure, or may have a faint petroleum-like odor, and is usually shipped as a liquefied gas with a foul-smelling odorant added.

### HAZARD DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard Rating</th>
<th>Firefighting</th>
<th>Reactivity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 - Health</td>
<td>FLAMMABLE GAS Stop flow of gas and use water spray to disperse vapors.</td>
<td>Propane may react violently with CHLORINE DIOXIDE and other OXIDIZING AGENTS (such as PERCHLORATES, PEROXIDES, PERMANGANATES, CHLORATES, NITRATES, CHLORINE, BROMINE and FLUORINE).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Fire</td>
<td>POISONOUS GASES ARE PRODUCED IN FIRE. CONTAINERS MAY EXPLODE IN FIRE. Use water spray to keep fire-exposed containers cool.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 - Reactivity</td>
<td>Vapor is heavier than air and may travel a distance to cause a fire or explosion far from the source or flash back. Flow, agitation, low humidity and other factors may generate electrostatic charges resulting in fire and/or explosion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOT#: UN 1978</td>
<td>Propane may form an ignitable vapor/air mixture in closed tanks or containers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERG Guide #: 115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard Class: 2.1 (Flammable gas)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### SPILL/LEAKS

**Isolation Distance:**
- **Spill:** 100 meters (330 feet)  
- **Fire:** 1,600 meters (1 mile)

Stop flow of gas. If source of leak is a cylinder and the leak cannot be stopped in place, remove the leaking cylinder to a safe place in the open air, and repair leak or allow cylinder to empty.

Conduct air monitoring to determine that Oxygen levels are above 19.5% and the Lower Explosive Limit (LEL) is not being exceeded.

Use only non-sparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of Propane.

Propane may "pool" or "settle" in low areas and may remain in a fixed location for a long period of time.

Keep Propane out of confined spaces, such as sewers, because of the possibility of an explosion.

Turn leaking cylinder with leak up to prevent escape of gas in liquid state.

Propane is not harmful to aquatic life.

### PHYSICAL PROPERTIES

- **Odor Threshold:** 20,000 ppm
- **Flash Point:** -155°F (-104°C)
- **LEL:** 2.1%
- **UEL:** 9.5%
- **Auto Ignition Temp:** 842°F (450°C)
- **Vapor Density:** 1.6 (air = 1)
- **Vapor Pressure:** >760 mm Hg at 68°F (20°C)
- **Specific Gravity:** 0.58 (water = 1)
- **Water Solubility:** Slightly soluble
- **Boiling Point:** 207°F (97°C)
- **Freezing Point:** -305.9°F (-187.7°C)
- **Critical Temperature:** 11.07 eV
- **Molecular Weight:** 44.09

### PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- **Gloves:** Insulated Nitrile or Neoprene (>8-hr breakthrough)
- **Coveralls:** Use turn out gear or flash protection if ignition/fire is the greatest hazard! Tychem® Responder® (>8-hr breakthrough)
- **Respirator:** >1,000 ppm or <19.5% Oxygen - SCBA

### HEALTH EFFECTS

- **Eyes:** Contact with liquefied gas may cause frostbite
- **Skin:** Contact with liquefied gas may cause frostbite
- **Inhalation:** Headache, dizziness, lightheadedness, passing out, and death

### FIRST AID AND DECONTAMINATION

Remove the person from exposure.

Flush eyes with large amounts of water for at least 15 minutes. Remove contact lenses if worn. Seek medical attention.

Immerse affected part in warm water. Seek medical attention.

Begin artificial respiration if breathing has stopped and CPR if necessary.

Transfer promptly to a medical facility.