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NEWS RELEASE

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HEATING WITH PROPANE REQUIRES SUMMER MAINTENANCE

BEAVER DAM, WIS. – Propane is an excellent energy source for your home — both inside and out. This clean-burning energy gives homeowners the flexibility to live where and how they want. However, because propane is a flammable substance, routine maintenance is important to the safety of you and your family, says Bill Herbst, Vice President of Energy Operations at United Cooperative.

“Summer is a good time to ensure that propane appliances and heating systems are working properly,” Herbst said. “Any home appliances powered by propane along with propane gas regulators, first and second stage need to be given some attention. Replacement of propane gas regulators should be considered every 15 years regardless if the propane tank is leased or owned. All of this should be performed by a CETP-certified service technician for safety and efficiency.

Propane leaks can be difficult to detect, Herbst added. “Propane smells like rotten eggs or a dead animal. Propane manufacturers add this smell to help alert customers to propane leaks,” he said. Some people may have difficulty smelling propane. Certain medical conditions, or the effects of medication, alcohol, tobacco, or drugs can make it more difficult to smell propane.

If you smell propane, experts recommend the following:

1. **NO FLAMES OR SPARKS.** Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or a fire.
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 nearby 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.

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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.

Finally, homeowners should also check the area around their appliances and vents to ensure there is no excess clutter or material blocking the air needed to reach the burner for proper combustion. And never store combustible materials near appliances.

Propane cylinders, tanks, and appliances incorporate special components (such as valves, connectors, controls, burners, and pilot lights) to keep them safe for use. Damaging these components can cause gas leaks. "Do not under any circumstances try to modify or repair valves, regulators, connectors, controls, or other appliance and cylinder/tank parts. Doing so creates the risk of a gas leak," Herbst said. If you are unable to operate any part of your propane system, or you are questioning the age of your propane gas regulators or have not had a system leak check performed on your gas system in some time please call your propane retailer or a qualified service technician. They can inspect, adjust, repair, or replace any part of your propane system.

ABOUT US:

Formed in 1936, United Cooperative is a full-service cooperative offering feed, grain, agronomy, and energy products and services to Wisconsin farmers and consumers. United Cooperative has locations in Auroraville, Baraboo, Beaver Dam, Coleman, Deerfield, Denmark, Greenville, Gresham, Hartford, Hillsboro, Horicon, Hustisford, Johnson Creek, Kendall, Mayville, Oconto Falls, Ontario, Oshkosh, Pickett, Poynette, Prairie du Sac, Pulaski, Reedsburg, Ripon, Rock Springs, Sauk City, Shawano, South Beaver Dam, Westfield, Wilton, Wonewoc and Wyocena. For more information, call 800-924-2991 or visit www.unitedcooperative.com.