



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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To: Directors of Health, Chief Sanitarians

From: Paul M. Schur, M.P.H.
Director
Division of Environmental Health

Subject: Interpretation of Section 19-13-B51b(14) and 19-13-B51d(a)(1) of the Public Health Code Regarding Propane

The Department of Public Health (DPH) has been requested to research and comment on the required separating distance between private water supplies and buried propane storage tanks. The review has included discussions with other states, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureaus of Water and Waste at Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection, representatives of the Natural Gas Industry, the State Building and Fire Marshall's office and the Environmental Epidemiology and Occupational Health Division of DPH.

Propane is a colorless and odorless gas. An odorant is added to make people aware of the presence of propane. Propane vaporizes rapidly from water. No long-term health effects are expected from exposure to propane in water at its solubility level.

- Propane storage tanks are not regulated by federal or state environmental underground storage tank regulations. Propane is not regulated as a hazardous chemical. It is exempt from Federal Superfund legislation. There is no maximum contaminant level for propane in water.
- A safety concern with propane may occur if the gas follows piping into a building and eventually may, with other conditions present, cause a fire or explosion.
- The Connecticut fire safety code requires "a ten (10) foot separating distance between underground storage tanks with a water capacity of 2,000 gallons or less and fifty (50) foot separating distance for underground storage tanks with a water capacity greater than 2,000 gallons from an important building or line of adjoining property."

Conclusion:

The separating distance between a private well water supply system and an underground propane storage tank system with a storage capacity of less than 2,000 gallons can be reduced from seventy-five (75) feet to twenty-five (25) feet; and the separating distance between an underground propane storage tank system with a storage capacity of 2,000 gallons or greater can be reduced from seventy-five (75) feet to fifty (50) feet.

Note: A propane storage tank system includes the storage tank, piping and other equipment associated with storage or transfer of the propane from storage.

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