

Safety Tip of the Month: April

HOME ALONE CAN BE A SAFE PLACE NPGA Offers Safety Tips for Children at Home

Over a million children are left home alone between the time school lets out and when a parent returns from work or during school vacations. The National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) offers the following safety tips about gas systems and appliances to help parents keep their children safe during this time.

Teach Appliance Safety

Take children on a tour of all home appliances, such as the furnace, water heater and refrigerator, and have them listen to the noises they make. Children will be less fearful when they know that the water heater is supposed to gurgle and that the furnace makes a sound like footsteps in the hallway. This is also a good time to teach your children about basic appliance safety rules:

- Never turn on appliances without an adult present.
- Keep papers and toys (especially remote-controlled cars) away from gas furnaces, space heaters and fireplaces.
- Stay away from propane tanks and pipes.
- Never play with matches.

Plan Emergency Procedures

Every child home alone should have a neighbor or adult family friend to turn to in case of an emergency.

Both natural and propane gas have an odorant added that smells like rotten eggs to help identify a gas leak. Children should follow these steps if they smell gas: 1) Exit the home immediately without using any electric switches or appliances; 2) Go to a trusted adult for help; and 3) Call mom or dad from a nearby phone.

Many accidents are avoidable when proper safety precautions are taken. To lessen the chances of a gas appliance emergency when children are home alone, parents should take advantage of the following tips:

1. Have all gas appliances installed by your propane supplier. For your protection, be sure all appliances purchased have been certified by an independent testing laboratory.
2. Make sure your present appliances are properly vented (when required). Poisonous carbon monoxide can be produced from improperly installed or inadequately vented appliances.
3. Keep combustibles away from appliances, and keep burner areas clean.
4. Have a B/C rated fire extinguisher on hand; be sure it is charged and know how to use it.
5. Never try to repair gas systems or appliances yourself. Always call your propane gas supplier.