

# CPA GUIDE

## Best practices recommended during COVID-19

VERSION 3 — MAY 4, 2020



Canadian  
Propane  
Association | Association  
canadienne  
du propane

PROPANE TRAINING INSTITUTE  
L'INSTITUT DE FORMATION DU PROPANE

LEARN AND PERFORM SAFELY,  
WITH A TRUSTED PARTNER

With the constant changes that are taking place across the country, we have put together some best practices that are being used throughout the industry to protect your employees and clients while maintaining propane as an essential service. Should there be measures proven beneficial, please do not hesitate to contact us so that we can share with everyone to help keep our industry personnel safe in their work practices. For any information or questions, please contact [robertloenhardt@propane.ca](mailto:robertloenhardt@propane.ca)

---

## Recommend and advertise cleaning measures

- Provide clear details of these measures and reinforce these details frequently to provide a secure feeling of stability and control of the situation.
- Provide abundant cleaning products in all places.
- Mandate additional and frequent cleaning of all surfaces: desks, phones, keyboards, counters, and any other frequently used surfaces.

**Leave cleaning products in conspicuous locations.** Employees constantly seeing products like hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, sprays and disposable towels will adopt the following behaviour:

- They will see that the employer is providing products that keep them safe;
- They will see and remember to use these products, making the workplace safer.

**REMEMBER: train** office personnel, drivers and technicians on safe practices. While everyone knows to wear gloves and avoid contact, some may not have clear thoughts on how to protect themselves.

**ANYONE showing signs of illness should be removed from the workplace. Doubt should outweigh work requirements. This will provide employees with the knowledge that their health is as important as productivity.**

**Encourage employees to discuss their concerns and suggestions regarding any added safety measures they may feel need upgrading.**

**Reinforce that leadership is open to discuss concerns.**

This document is provided solely for informational purposes in response to COVID-19. It is not to be construed as legal advice or legal guidance. The CPA disclaims any liability associated with the accuracy or content of the information contained in this document. Users should consult governments authorities and resources for the most complete and current information pertaining to COVID-19 or contact an attorney for any specific advice.

## Contents

Warning .....	3
Measures for Office Customer Response .....	4
Measures for Office Staff .....	5
Measures related to Filling Propane cylinders – Plant Operations .....	5
Measures for the Distribution Chain/ Delivery Personnel .....	6
Measures for MUST DO appointments for service technician.....	7
Measures for Bulk Truck Drivers .....	8
Measures for Reopening your Retail Operations .....	10



## Warning

**Respect Individual Rights:** While identifying risks is paramount, employers must also ensure that they are complying with all applicable privacy and human rights laws. If health information is obtained indicating the trainee could have been exposed, employers need to make every attempt to avoid transmitting information identifying the individual but are required to notify all staff without providing specific information about who was infected or exposed.

Employers should also consider correcting any inappropriate discussion of anyone who may have been exposed either in their duties or have self-identified as having been in contact during off-duty time.

**Be Prepared for Work Refusals:** Employers and employees are aware of the right to refuse unsafe work. An employee may, in certain circumstances, refuse to work if he or she has reason to believe that there is the potential for danger or unsafe working conditions.

Employers should be prepared for this possible situation and formulate ideas regarding planned responses and measures to make trainees feel better at ease when shown the added measures being put in place.

## Measures for Office Customer Response



- Close sales offices to the general public
- Close showrooms.
- Advertise that protective measures are in place to protect client and workers
- If possible, set up electronic contact capabilities in every aspect of customer relation
- Accept orders by phone or email.
- For payments:
  - Set up electronic payment where possible
  - Ensure staff do not accept or receive cash money, which is deemed a contamination point – set up measures for e-transfer payments in place of cash transactions
  - Set up bill delivery methods to avoid contact, including removing signature required on devices
  - Remove the signature requirement on the devices.
- Suspend all non-essential work, particularly activities conducted indoors or in close contact with customers
- Suspend in-home inspections where possible to protect staff and customers
- For service appointments where technicians **must** be on site for tank and equipment maintenance:
  - Take proactive steps and inform customers ahead of time.
  - If you must maintain a visit, be proactive and inform customers of the safety measures being implemented to ensure the safety of the customer and of the employee
  - Inform your customer of the security measures implemented to ensure proper distancing.
- Diminish customer support staff where possible, while ensuring adequate distancing is provided for those employees required to be in-office
- Enhance data and infrastructure resources to enable work-from-home schedules where possible
- Encourage employees to self-report illness and work from home or self-isolate for a period of fourteen days
- Advertise customer response may be delayed due to scaled back modelling of customer support staff; ask for patience
- Reinforce to customers that propane is available and will continue to be delivered
- Keep all papers in a bin for a few days and use latex gloves before manipulating





## Measures for Office Staff

- Train on how to effectively clean work surfaces
  - Frequently wipe phone, keyboards, mouse and computer equipment
- Inform your staff that they have to practice “Social Distancing” with colleagues and clients
- Ensure cafeteria or lunch room allow for social distancing
  - Frequently clean lunchroom room, utensils, etc.
  - Suggest to staff to bring their own utensils
- Add signs to encourage to frequently wash hands
- Provide gloves where they may be useful
- Whenever possible, suggest people work from home
- If required, conduct employee meetings outside in open air, or in larger garage or other indoor areas to ensure employee numbers and space can be maintained.
- Stress often, almost to the point of irritation the need to ensure personal hygiene practices are adequate. Some employees may complain, but it instills an understanding that leadership cares and that it is important to management.
- Avoid sharing vehicles between employees and employee car sharing.



## Measures related to Filling Propane cylinders – Plant Operations

- Advertise clean practices at loading and unloading facilities
- Stagger loading and unloading times (so not everyone arrives at the same time).
- Advertise vigilant personal hygiene:
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water or regularly clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizers
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth to avoid transmission via direct contact
  - Practice good respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth and nose, with your bent elbow or tissue, when you cough or sneeze
  - Avoid close contact with others by maintaining at least two metres distance. Do not shake hands or hug.
  - Do not allow contact between employees unless through personal protective equipment (PPE) and only when absolutely required
  - If you have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, seek medical advice immediately **DO NOT GO TO WORK**





- Use wipes to sterilize gloves
- Wash and disinfect cylinders and tank filling points (especially the handles and valves), preferably before they enter the facility.
  - Washing or disinfecting can be done using a sprayer, plunge bath [e.g., garbage bin] or antiseptic wipes, in an isolated area, inside the facility, or on the unloading platform with additional precautions.
  - Personnel involved in the handling, spraying or wiping of untreated cylinders, should wear appropriate PPE – face shield, coveralls and gloves.
  - Commercial solutions, or bleach mixed in the right concentration with water, should be used to ensure the virus is killed. These [recommendations on the use of bleach](#) issued by the Hong Kong government is a useful reference.
  - For plants with washing equipment, make sure that the solution temperature and soap content are in line with the manufacturers' recommendation
  - Where washing or disinfecting the cylinders/tanks is not practical, it is important to ensure personnel follow the plant procedures and wear the correct gloves whenever handling cylinders and filling equipment



- Restrict the number of personnel on the loading/unloading platform and trucks, and ensure everyone loading/unloading cylinders maintain at least a two-metre distance between them.
- Wash down truck unloading area before and after cylinder deliveries
- Ensure the use of coveralls, (antistatic) gloves and protective glasses when in the plant. Disinfect all PPE that will be reused the next day and provide an additional set of PPE to allow for cleaning
- Restrict the number of people sharing common facilities (changing rooms, kitchens, smoking rooms, waiting rooms, etc.)



## Measures for the Distribution Chain/ Delivery Personnel

Implement new strategies to safeguard drivers during deliveries:

- Ensure customers are aware to keep their distance, both for delivery safety and social distancing
- Require, when possible, electronic bill provision, or a reliable delivery process for paper bills. For instance, notify customers the bill will be left under the tank lid, or in a mailbox in place of providing in person.
- Ensure that deliveries are required, and not just top ups
- Provide your staff with key messages to avoid customers should a driver need to distance themselves



- Ask your drivers for tricks and for tips to improve their work conditions. They will surprise you with added helpful measures
- Drivers and delivery personnel should carry alcohol-based hand sanitizers in the vehicle to use when necessary
- At all times, keep two-metre distance from each other
- If possible, service personnel should disinfect customers' returned equipment by wiping the handling and valving surfaces before bringing the equipment back to the work base
- Clean and disinfect personnel transportation, servicing and bulk delivery vehicle cabs used for transporting equipment and bulk delivery, before and after journeys
- Allow for staff to refuse delivery if they have reason to believe it is an unsafe location
- Maintain a clean work environment and sanitise often with cleaning agents where necessary



### Measures for **MUST DO** appointments for service technician

- **For the time being, the best practice is to prohibit access to residences** unless absolutely necessary. Therefore, do only the mandatory visits.
- Ask customers to respect the health and safety of your teams and communities. For clients with symptoms, encourage them to report.
- Prior to each home visit, the technician should call to confirm the appointment and confirm that no one at the appointment site has symptoms of COVID-19.
- If yes, you may refuse to go, depending on the nature of the problem.
- If not, the technician should explain that additional hygiene measures should be observed.
- Explain hygiene measures - distancing, hand washing, etc.
- For your clients who are not sick and need services, agree to reschedule an appointment.
- For clients who are sick or high risk, postpone the appointment.
- Make every effort to reschedule appointments.

### If you need to visit:

- Train technicians on the measures you have put in place to help them stay safe.
- Remember: When training is offered to employees, even if it is perceived negatively, staff understand that you are able to establish safe work arrangements.
- Provide disposable gloves for work requiring dexterity to allow technicians to work without their thicker gloves.
- When technicians need to enter a residence, ensure customers understand the distancing requirements to avoid contaminating technicians.
- Provide hand sanitizer and encourage use before and after each visit.
- Add extra cleaning products and time for drivers to clean vehicle before and after shift.
- Remind technicians to clean tools after each visit.
- Provide technical advice on customer interactions - How to politely but firmly to avoid contact.
- Provide advice on how to manage paper invoices, shipping slips, etc. if you do not use an electronic system. (Provide plastic bags to your staff to allow customers to place the documents. Then, place them in a closed bin for 72 hours before processing them. Have staff wear gloves when handling them for processing.)
- Ask your technicians for feedback on what they think might be helpful.
- Check in daily, even during the day, and learn about the health measures they take and the difficulties they encounter.



### Measures for Bulk Truck Drivers

#### Before the driver leaves your company:

- Provide literature on new procedures you may implement at customer delivery sites
- Provide additional personal protective equipment (PPE). A second set will allow drivers to switch out while one set gets cleaned
- Provide medical type rubber or nitrile gloves for dexterity type work while ensuring protective layer for the driver's hands
- Have drivers clean driving instruments, handles, steering wheel, armrests and other vehicle surfaces.





- If possible, do not share trucks between shifts during the viral period. For shared or exchanged trucks, allow a cleaning period to allow drivers to disinfect their new assigned vehicle.
- Stagger loading periods to thin out employee congestion during start and load periods - allowing for social distancing

### During deliveries



- Provide extra cleaning products and plan for additional time for drivers to clean trucks before and after shift
- Ask drivers to clean driving instruments, handles, steering wheel, armrests and other vehicle surfaces between deliveries.
- Provide sanitizer for times when washing hands is unavailable
- Provide advice on how to manage paper invoices, shipping slips, etc. if you do not use an electronic system. (Provide plastic bags to your staff to allow customers to place the documents. Then, place them in a closed bin for 72 hours before processing them. Have staff wear gloves when handling them for processing.)
- Provide driver advice on customer interactions – how to politely but firmly avoid contact if the customer approaches the driver.
- If possible, on a daily basis, call your drivers to check in and identify any issues they may be experiencing
- Frequently remind drivers that their workplace is generally an isolated position and that they should feel safe working in a quarantine type environment.
- Remind drivers to bring lunches. Restaurants and stores will be frequently closed.





## Measures for Reopening your Retail Operations


Finally, you can re-open your public facing operations. But because the risks are still there, it is important to implement appropriate public health measures and to adjust your operations to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 amongst employees and customers. Below is advice for restarting retail operations.

### Before Opening

- Determine, beforehand the number of customers able to enter in your premises to maintain social distancing, which implies limiting the number of people admitted to only a few at a time.
- Determine the security practices that you will implement for the delivery and reception of your products.
- Be sure to communicate your instructions to all of your employees, suppliers and delivery people.
- Reschedule unnecessary visits to the workplace by supply chain partners, vendors, delivery people or others who do not need to be there now.
- **OUTSIDE**, install a station to allow customers to wash and dry their hands if you can. Don't forget to include a large garbage can. If hand washing is not possible, install a station with appropriate hand sanitizer.
- Make sure you assign a staff to supply the washing station with soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels.
- In the parking lot, plan to mark the ground to indicate the distances and routes to follow to control customers.
- Plan to use a daily checklist to verify the health of your workers: [📄](#)
- Prepare, based on your operations, a daily checklist to verify the security of your retail space.

## **COVID-19 symptoms - DO NOT FORGET:**

It is your responsibility to identify and exclude employees or customers with COVID-19 symptoms.

- Screen workers regularly for health issues. If anyone develops symptoms of COVID-19, implement procedures for reporting the illness and keeping the worker away from others. [See section Warning – page 3.](#)
- Train staff on their role, responsibility and health and safety rights.
- Train staff who will interact with customers so that they can share with them your instructions to maintain social distancing and the cleaning procedures you offer.
- Train staff on how to exclude customers who may have symptoms and on available alternatives (online shopping or phone order, sending someone else to make the purchase, etc.)
- Post your hygiene measures on your door – using this model for example: 
- Make sure that a member of your staff will be assigned to supervise clients when they arrive.
- **INSIDE**, predetermine the flow of customers by organizing one-way aisles either by placing arrows on the floor or by placing posters to this effect.
- Review your sanitation procedures and increase their frequency, especially for high touch surfaces and public areas and washrooms open to the public.
- Train staff on new sanitation procedures and frequency.
- If you have items you know customers are likely to touch, think about offering gloves to customers before they enter the store or ensure you will have a staff dedicated to the sanitation of surfaces.
- Assign and train staff to ensure customers are following physical distancing protocols in areas likely to be congested (for example: check-out or delivery areas)

## **Interaction with Customer**

- Closely monitor customer behavior waiting for permission to enter. If necessary, intervene to ensure they respect social distancing – 2 m [6']
- Ensure and enforce distance between workers too. Where possible, avoid multiple workers doing the same task in close proximity.
- Within the sales area, ensure physical distancing (staying 2 metres apart) between customers and sales people.
- Require that your sales people to wear gloves – this will help remind them not to shake hands with a customer upon closing a sale.
- Train your sales people to pay particular attention in to sanitization of customers' frequently touched surfaces.
- If necessary, barriers can be erected between staff and customers such as lines on the ground.

- Provide hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes or gloves if a customer is planning to touch the surface of a product.
- Install garbage receptacles for customers to dispose of used sanitizing wipes and other items in several locations.

### **Check-out Operations**

- Provide a garbage receptacle for the disposal of used sanitizing wipes and other items at the check-out and at the exit.
- If you can, install a plexiglass barrier with a passage hole for item exchange or payment.
- Plan floor markings to show appropriate distances at check-out.
- Minimize staff and customer interaction using tap debit or credit without needing to touch the card.
- Ask before offering the receipt. If you know the customer and you have the email, offer to send bills and information electronically.
- Disinfect payment terminals / POS devices, after each customer, including PIN pads and cash drawers.
- Do not let customers bring their reusable bags to prevent them from being handled by your staff.

### **Measures for Online Customer Response**

- Consider contacting your regular customers to offer online or over the phone pre-ordering for pick-up to reduce the requirement for customers to enter your workspaces and sales floors.
- If you offer home delivery, ask your customer to pay in advance electronically or by credit card.
- Maintain physical distance during delivery.
- If customers are offered the pick up of merchandise purchased online, ask them to pay in advance electronically or by credit card.
- Maintain physical distance during pick up.

**Some examples of PPE that may be suited to staff work requirements:**



**Gloves** – The use of disposable gloves can protect employees from contact with surfaces, product and equipment. Have practices set up for suitable disposal of the gloves and train employees on when gloves should be changed (tears, dirt, or contaminated). Before implementing gloves, examine work requirements to ensure gloves will not add dexterity or grip problems or place employees at risk of snag with moving parts or equipment.



**Goggles or Face Shields** – These should be assigned to individuals and not shared. This equipment can be reused regularly if sanitized between use. Identify if goggles become difficult to use, or impede vision. Use of face shields may be a better fit for some tasks.

Train everyone on how to keep their work surfaces, order screens, debit machines, cash registers, and equipment clean.

.....  
*Keep up to date with best practices. Check public federal and provincial health updates for added measures if new controls are identified.*  
.....

**Re-evaluate**

COVID 19 has presented all of us with challenges we have never seen before. It's important to consider that any of the adjustments you are making today, may need further adjustment tomorrow. It is recommended that you revise your preventative measures on an ongoing basis and adjust them if they are not working well enough or causing other issues at work.

Bottom line? Plan to make regular check-ins part of your COVID 19 prevention plans. This will allow you to minimize risks and be able to continue offer your products and services .