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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Keeping Your Family Safe:

Important information about propane safety and WINTER STORMS

Ocean City, MD. (December 20, 2010). — December 21st marks the first day of winter. As many homeowners across the Mid Atlantic have already seen this past week, winter is here and homeowners need to be prepared for heavy snowfalls and frigid temperatures.

“It is so important that homeowners are careful when clearing snow and ice from roofs, chimneys, appliance vents, and areas near propane tanks and gas piping,” said Jeff Kerns, president of the Mid Atlantic Propane Gas Association (MAPGA).

The Mid Atlantic Propane Gas Association was founded as a non-profit organization to promote the safe, efficient use of odorized propane gas as an energy source and additionally serve its members and the public within the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States.

“Make sure your propane tank, whether it is located above or below the ground, is marked properly by a flag, pole, or stake that is higher than the average snow cover depth for your location,” he said. “This will increase the odds of it being seen by someone such as a snowplow operator, reducing the chances for a potential accident.”

MAPGA would like to recommend that by taking a few simple safety precautions and discussing them with your family, you can reduce the potential for property loss and personal injury.

When handled properly, propane is a safe, clean, versatile and highly efficient fuel that can be used for many consumer products. If your home or business uses propane to generate heat or run appliances, there are a few simple steps you can take to keep everyone safe and avoid potential dangers:

Be prepared for a winter storm:

- Make sure the heating system and appliances are running efficiently. Have a qualified service technician inspect and service the appliances and propane system annually. This will ensure that the appliances are running as efficiently as possible, conserving fuel and saving dollars.
- Make sure there is an adequate propane supply. During and after a winter storm, roads may be inaccessible for delivery. It is recommended that users establish an automatic refill delivery schedule with the propane retailer.
- Mark the location of the tank. The marker should be higher than the average snow cover depth. It will help to avoid plowing or shoveling rooftop snow on top of your tank. Should the tank become covered with snow, use a broom to clear it.

What to do after a winter storm:

After a winter storm, use caution in the area surrounding your home or property. If you have any doubts about your safety, leave the area immediately and have your property inspected by a qualified building inspector or structural engineer before re-entering. Take the time to carefully evaluate the condition of all the structures on your property. If it is dark, use flashlights, not candles.

Look carefully around the entire area. Check for downed power lines; they can create major safety hazards. High winds or falling ice can move, shift, or damage gas lines and tanks. Immediately call your local utility company or propane retailer if any of these hazards exist.

Follow these general safety rules:

Sometimes, as a result of a winter storm, a power outage can occur, or pipes can crack and burst due to extremely cold weather. To help reduce the potential for injury or death, there are general safety rules you should observe at all times:

- **NEVER** use outdoor propane appliances indoors or in enclosed areas. This can result in CO poisoning or death. These include outdoor portable heaters, barbecue grills, and portable generators. Only use appliances indoors that are designed and approved for indoor use.
- **NEVER** store or place a propane cylinder indoors or in an enclosed area such as a basement, garage, shed, or tent.
- **NEVER** use a gas oven or range-top burners to provide space heating.
- **DO NOT** try to modify or repair valves, regulators, or other appliance parts.
- If melting snow or ice floods any part of your home or farm, **NEVER** turn on a light switch, use any power source, or inspect your household appliances while standing in water. This can result in electrocution.
- **DO** inspect chimneys, flue pipes, and vent connectors for damage, blockage, or debris.

- **DO** inspect your propane appliances for water or other damage, if it is safe to do so. If the appliances have electric components and have been exposed to water, they can create a fire hazard.

If you suspect any of your propane appliances, equipment, or vehicles have been under water or they have been damaged, or you have turned off your gas supply:

- **DO** schedule a time for a qualified service technician to perform a complete inspection of your propane system. The technician can also perform a leak test on the system and re-light your pilot lights.
- **DO NOT** use or operate appliances, equipment, or vehicles, or turn on the gas supply, until a qualified service technician has inspected your system.

Propane users can find more safety tips online www.mapqa.org and www.propanesafety.com.

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