

# 9 Crucial Questions To Ask Your Propane Company

## **This FREE Report Includes:**

- ✦ The 9 crucial questions you need to ask when shopping for a propane company.
- ✦ A worksheet for easy side-by-side comparison of each propane company you call.
- ✦ A list of residential propane service suppliers.

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# 9 Crucial Questions To Ask Your Propane Company

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If you're a typical homeowner shopping for a propane supplier, you'll probably call 3 to 5 propane companies and make a decision based on what sounds like the lowest price. Unfortunately, **price per gallon can be a deceiving number**. Many propane companies will attract new customers with a low advertised price per gallon, then surprise the customer with additional fees and hidden charges.

This special report has been developed to help you make a side-by-side comparison of the propane companies you're considering doing business with (use the attached worksheet as a scorecard). By asking each propane supplier these 9 crucial questions, you'll better understand how much you'll *really* pay for service, and decide which propane company can provide you with the best total value.

## **1. What is your current price per gallon?**

This is a good place to start, but keep in mind that there is more to the story than just price per gallon.

## **2. Is this your regular price, or is it a special price for new customers?**

This is a trick question. Propane suppliers will jump at the chance to tell you all about the special low propane rate new customers get for their first fill, or even for the first full year. You've probably come to expect special deals when you shop, but when one person pays less than market value in the fuel industry, that means someone else is paying more than market value to cover the difference. Are you willing to pay more per gallon when you're locked in to the "regular" rate next year so that the new guys can pay less? Make sure the propane company you choose will still treat you fairly even after you've been with them for a while.

## **3. Will I have to pay any delivery fees or fuel surcharges?**

Some propane companies in Michigan charge their customers as much as \$12.99 every time they take a propane delivery. That's like paying a 4% surcharge on a \$300 delivery, or a 6.5% surcharge on a \$200 delivery. See if you can negotiate up front to have these charges waived from any future bill.

## **4. Will I have to pay extra to enroll in your price protection program?**

Fuel prices are unpredictable to say the least. Many propane suppliers will offer their customers some sort of "capped price" program that's designed to protect customers from price uncertainty during the heating season. While this peace-of-mind is a great benefit to you as a customer, be careful, it could also be a hidden price increase. For example, if you use 500 gallons over the course of the winter, and pay an additional \$59.00 for the price protection, you've actually just signed up to pay a \$0.12 per gallon rate increase. Be sure to find out if the propane company will charge you anything to take advantage of their price protection program.

## **5. Do you offer an auto-fill program?**

Technology is a wonderful thing. If you use propane as your primary heating source at your primary residence, your propane company should be able to use a computer program to accurately estimate when your tank is in need of a fill and automatically schedule a delivery. You'll still want to keep an eye on your tank gauge or let your propane company know if you make any lifestyle changes that will significantly change your usage, but for the most part an auto-fill program will make your propane service pretty hassle-free. Remember though, if the propane company charges a delivery fee, you may not want to put them in control of how often they make a delivery to you.

## **6. Do you offer a no run-out guarantee?**

It doesn't do you any good to get a great price on propane if you're likely to experience a run-out. While most propane companies won't make a no run-out guarantee, they should at least be able to tell you what their reliability rate is. Companies that offer an accurate auto-fill delivery service can have reliability rates of 99.99% for customers enrolled in that program.

## **7. What kind of payment options do you have available?**

Most people don't like paying for an entire propane delivery at the time of delivery. Your propane company should give you the option to spread your payments out over the course of the year. You should also have the option to pay bills electronically online, or to have regular payments automatically withdrawn from your bank account. Keep in mind that these convenient payment options are also convenient for the propane company, so see if they'll offer an incentive for enrolling in one of them.

## **8. Are your employees trained and certified?**

Safety is an extremely important factor when working with propane gas. Not only is it illegal to operate a propane service without proper certification, it's also extremely dangerous. Make sure the propane company you choose to do business with has their employees trained and certified through a reputable organization such as the National Propane Gas Association. If they are not trained and certified (or don't KNOW if they are certified), don't do business with them. Period.

## **9. Will there always be a live person there to answer my calls, 24 hours a day?**

When shopping for a propane company, pay close attention to how long it takes before you get to talk to a real, live person. Phone prompt systems are becoming more and more common in almost every industry. It may be only mildly annoying when you're calling about something like a billing question, but it can be a serious problem if you ever have to report a safety concern or a propane run-out in the cold winter months, especially if it's after regular business hours.

# 9 Crucial Questions Worksheet

	1	2	3	4
Propane Supplier:				<b>HomeWorks</b>
Phone Number:				<b>877-574-2740</b>

## 1. What is your current price per gallon?

Credit Approved Rate:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Will-Call Rate:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Cash On Delivery Rate:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Pre-Buy Rate:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Other Rate:	\$	\$	\$	\$

## 2. Is this your regular price, or is it a special price for new customers?

Current Special Offer:				
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## 3. Will I have to pay any delivery fees or fuel surcharges?

Delivery fee:	\$	\$	\$	<b>NONE</b>
Fuel surcharge:	\$	\$	\$	<b>NONE</b>
HAZMAT fee:	\$	\$	\$	<b>NONE</b>
Can fee can be waived?				<b>-</b>

## 4. Will I have to pay extra to enroll in your price protection program?

Price protection offered:				<b>YES</b>
Capped rate:	\$	\$	\$	\$
Enrollment fee:	\$	\$	\$	<b>FREE</b>

## 5. Do you offer an auto-fill program?

Auto-fill program available:				<b>YES</b>
Enrollment fee:	\$	\$	\$	<b>FREE</b>

## 6. Do you offer a no-run out guarantee?

No run-out guarantee:				<b>YES</b>
Reliability Rate:	%	%	%	<b>99.99%</b>

(FOR AUTO-FILL)

## 7. What kind of payment options do you have available?

Equal Payment Program:				<b>YES</b>
Online eBill:				<b>YES</b>
Auto Bank Draft:				<b>YES</b>
Other:				<b>YES</b>
Incentive to enroll:	\$	\$	\$	<b>YES</b>

(CALL FOR DETAILS)

## 8. Are your employees trained and certified?

Trained and certified:				<b>YES</b>
Certified by:				<b>NPGA</b>

## 9. Will there always be a live person there to answer my calls, 24 hours a day?

24-hour customer service:				<b>YES</b>
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# Propane Company List

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**HomeWorks Tri-County Propane**  
Portland & Blanchard | 877-574-2740  
www.homeworks.org

**Alto Gas**

Alto, Charlotte, Edmore | 989-875-7797

**Amerigas**

888-727-7717

**Becks Gas**

St. Johns | 989-224-6825

**Crystal Flash**

Grand Rapids | 800-875-4851

**Diamond Propane**

Woodland | 866-579-9993

**Ferrellgas**

E. Lansing, Howell, Remus | 800-677-8903

**Northwest Energy**

Charlotte & Holly | 800-388-7987

**Pohl Oil**

Westphalia | 989-587-3291

**Pro Gas**

Barryton | 989-382-7772

**Rural Gas & Appliance**

Howard City, Grand Ledge, Ionia | 616-527-2050

**Schafer Propane**

Pewamo | 989-593-3550

**Scotland Oil & Propane**

Alpena | 989-354-4833