

Do you own a propane storage tank?

BC Safety Authority (BCSA) is reminding owners of propane storage tanks that an operating permit is required for each tank in BC, as per BCSA Directive #D-BP-2015-01.

Which propane storage tanks require an operating permit?

All propane storage tanks in operation (e.g., pressurized above 15 pounds per square inch gauge - psig) require an operating permit. Common sizes of propane storage tanks currently available vary from 120 US water gallons (USWG) up to 1000 USWG; however, tanks may be constructed for other capacities.

Propane cylinders (e.g., used with barbecues, small heating equipment, and recreation vehicles) are subject to

Transport Canada regulations and **do not** require a BCSA operating permit. For more details, see the ['Transportation of Dangerous Goods – Containers'](#) section under 'Safety' on Transport Canada's website at www.tc.gc.ca.



Who should take out an operating permit?

The propane tank owner should take out the operating permit.

What are some of the responsibilities of the operating permit holder?

- Applying and paying for the permit, including annual renewals. (see 'Fee Waiver' on page 3).
- Complying with the terms and conditions of the operating permit.
- Ensuring the permit is in place before using, operating or performing work on the tank.
- Ensuring all regulated work is done by individuals with the appropriate certification who are employed by either a company with a valid gas contractor's licence or, where applicable, an establishment with a valid operating permit allowing regulated work.
- Upon completion of an assessment by a safety officer, BCSA will advise the operating permit holder of any safety issue or code non-compliance. The permit holder must then correct the issue or non-compliance and advise BCSA.

Who is qualified to maintain a propane tank and service the pressure relief devices?

Individuals employed by a company with a valid gas contractor's licence and who hold a valid and appropriate Certificate of Qualification recognized by a BCSA provincial safety manager in order to:

- transfer propane from one container to another (e.g., adding, removing, dispensing or defueling);
- inspect, maintain, service or remove tank components, including pressure relief devices; and
- connect or disconnect gas systems to propane containers.

Talk to your propane supplier about maintenance or find a licensed gas contractor on BCSA's website under '[Find a Contractor](#)'.



What is the process to apply for an operating permit?

1. Tank owners complete an *Operating Permit Application for Propane Pressure Vessels* ([Form 1509](#) on BCSA's website under *Forms & Fees*) and email it to propane@safetyauthority.ca, or call 778-396-2033 for assistance.
2. After submitting the application, owners with more than five tanks or with tanks in more than one location will be emailed a spreadsheet with the required data fields to complete. The data required will include - but is not limited to - the information on the tank's name plate and the tank location.
3. Tank owners will be contacted if further clarification or information is required.
4. Tank owners will receive an invoice (annually) listing all of the units.
5. Once payment is processed, an operating permit will be issued. For tanks that are eligible for the fee waiver (see page 3) an operating permit will be issued after the permit application is processed.

What are the annual fees?

Propane tank owners are required to pay an annual fee under one of the following fee models:

Standard permit fees: An annual fee is applicable to each tank and will be based on its physical dimensions. Please refer to Tables 1 and 2 on pages 3 and 4.

Alternative permit fees: Large operators or suppliers may apply to submit a Safety Management Plan as an alternative method to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the *Safety Standards Act*, associated regulations and adopted codes. Fees will vary based on the scope of their operations. Please see the Alternative Safety Approaches (ASA) section at safetyauthority.ca for more information.

If you rent or lease a propane tank, your tank supplier may or may not pass along various fees. We encourage all propane users to understand these fee models and contact their propane tank supplier if they have any questions about their fees.

Fee Waiver (applicable to both the standard and ASA models)

The operating permit fee will be automatically waived for tanks equal to or less than 500 USWG, regardless of purpose or use. For tanks over 500 USWG that are used for residential purposes only, owners can apply for a waiver.

'Residential purposes' applies to any tank in which propane is stored to provide fuel to a structure used primarily as a private residence but does not include a hotel. A hotel is defined in the *Hotel Guest Registration Act* as an inn or building in which private rooms are maintained for the accommodation of the public.

If safety concerns or non-compliances are discovered that require safety officers to revisit a site, re-assessment fees may still apply to cover costs.

Regardless of whether the fee is waived or not, all owners of tanks that are in operation and pressurized above 15 psig are required to apply for a permit and provide their tank data to BCSA.

Table 1: Tank Dimension-Based Operating Permit Fees

Diameter	Length											
	< 5 M		5 - 10 M		10 - 15 M		15 - 20 M		20 - 25 M		> 25 M	
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017	2016	2017
< 1 M	\$27	\$28	\$41	\$42	\$64	\$66	\$82	\$84	\$105	\$108	\$125	\$129
1 - 2 M	\$38	\$39	\$52	\$53	\$75	\$77	\$93	\$95	\$116	\$119	\$136	\$140
2 - 3 M	\$53	\$55	\$67	\$69	\$90	\$93	\$108	\$111	\$131	\$135	\$151	\$156
3 - 4 M	\$64	\$66	\$78	\$80	\$101	\$104	\$119	\$122	\$142	\$146	\$162	\$167
4 - 5 M	\$74	\$76	\$88	\$90	\$111	\$114	\$129	\$132	\$152	\$156	\$172	\$177
> 5 M	\$89	\$92	\$103	\$106	\$126	\$130	\$144	\$148	\$167	\$172	\$187	\$193



Table 2: 2016 and 2017 Tank Volumetric-Based Operating Permit Fees (in US water gallons)

Volume	Operating Permit Fee	
	2016	2017
≤ 500 USWG*	\$27	\$28
501 - 999 USWG*	\$27	\$28
1,000 to 1,999 USWG*	\$38	\$39
≥ 2,000 USWG	Dimensions required	

* For reference, if tank dimensions are unavailable for tanks less than 2,000 USWG, Table 2 assumes:

- 250 and 500 USWG tanks: diameter < 39.4" (= 1 M) and length < 197" (= 5 M)
- 1,000 USWG tanks: diameter 39.4" to 78.8" (= 1 – 2 M) and length < 197" (= 5 M)
- Dimensions must be provided for tanks < 2,000 USWG with non-standard dimensions, or tanks ≥ 2,000 USWG.

Please note that fees may change annually. Please visit our website at safetyauthority.ca and click on 'Fee Schedules' under the 'Permits' section for the current fees.

How does BCSA provide oversight to propane vessels?

To help clients ensure that their tanks meet safety standards, BCSA will utilize a risk-based, sample and audit approach to identify areas of greatest safety concern. Our Accident Prevention Model includes:

- Assessment via sample inspections and audits of tank maintenance records.
- Education, such as providing information and videos on propane equipment safety.
- Enforcement to ensure that propane equipment is properly installed, maintained and safe.
- Research into incidents involving propane.

For more information, please watch our [online video](#) that summarizes what you need to know. Simply visit safetyauthority.ca, search 'propane tank' and click on 'Are you an owner or operator?'.

Why is this important?

Since 2004, BC law requires all pressure vessel owners to have a permit to use this type of equipment. In particular, when this equipment is used to store large quantities of combustible fuel, such as propane, there is an inherent safety risk involved to owners and the surrounding public and property.

An operating permit is required for propane tanks in order for BCSA to provide safety oversight. Having this data enables us to assess hazards and effectively communicate important safety information to owners so that they can protect themselves, their equipment and those around them.

Questions about operating permits or the application process?

Please contact us at propane@safetyauthority.ca or 778-396-2033.