Liquified Petroleum Gas

L.P.G. (normally sold as BUTANE or PROPANE) is supplied as a liquid under pressure and subsequently vapourised for use as a fuel. The main hazards associated with L.P.G. are leakage (as a gas it will sink to the lowest possible level) followed by ignition (when mixed with air it is highly flammable and potentially explosive). Simple but effective safety steps are given below which can help prevent serious accidents, and you may find them useful as a safety checklist.

NOTE The safety precautions required for L.P.G. vary depending on the quantity being stored and the containers used (i.e. cylinders, cartridges or bulk tanks). Advice on all aspects of siting, storage and use should be sought from your L.P.G. supplier and your local Environmental Health Department.

STEP 1 Store all cylinders (full or empty) externally in a secure well ventilated compound. Do not store below ground level, or adjacent to openings into buildings or drains. Compound gates should open outwards.

STEP 2 Keep storage areas clear of combustible materials and ignition sources and clearly mark with warning, no smoking and fire procedure signs.

STEP 3 Provide and maintain suitable fire fighting equipment e.g. dry powder extinguishers, and ensure it is readily accessible.

STEP 4 Store cylinders in an upright position. Do not stack above 2.5m high and leave sufficient space for access, cylinder removal and fire fighting.

STEP 5 From 1st January, 1996 all work on gas appliances must be carried out by CORGI (Council for Registered Gas Installers) registered installers. Ensure anyone you employ to install or work on your gas system is CORGI registered.
CORGI: Tel. 01256 - 707060

STEP 6 In rooms where L.P.G. appliances are used, ensure plenty of high and low level ventilation and provide a readily accessible isolation point to switch off the supply quickly in the event of an emergency.

STEP 7 Have all appliances and flues regularly checked and maintained. Carry out visual checks for damage to pipework and flexible hoses.

STEP 8 Turn off cylinder valves at the end of each working day, and change cylinders away from ignition sources in a well ventilated place (preferably outside).

case study

A catering employee suffered flash burns to his face and arms when he investigated a gas leak in a faulty cooker. The cooker was a second-hand appliance and although the oven section was not being used, gas was leaking from a faulty valve. The employee was testing for the gas leak using a lighter when it ignited and he was engulfed in flames.