



## FINDING YOUR NEW PROPANE PARTNER

When comparing prices among propane suppliers, it is important to ask the right questions in order to get the information you need to make an informed decision. Many companies tack on a variety of fees in order to promote a lower per-gallon rate. When shopping, don't just look for the lowest price; price alone can be a deceiving number.

We developed this tool to help you know what questions to ask when shopping for a propane partner. By asking each prospective propane supplier these questions (and using the attached worksheet to track your information), you will better understand how much you will *really* pay for service.

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

This is the logical first question, but don't make it your last. There is typically more to the story.

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

Many propane suppliers will lure new customers in with a low price. Sometimes it's for the first fill or even for the first year. But what happens then? Someone else is paying a higher price in order to cover that difference. So while your first fill or first year may be at a great price, remember that you may be the one paying the higher price next year when the special new customer pricing comes out. Make sure you partner with a company that values its current customers as much as the next new customer.

### 3. Will I have to pay a delivery fee or other charges?

Many propane providers charge a fee every time they make a delivery – some as high as \$21! That's like paying a 7% surcharge on a \$300 propane delivery. Some also charge other miscellaneous fees such as fuel surcharges or HAZMAT charges. Be sure and ask about all fees, and ask if fees can be waived.

### 4. Do you offer a price protection program, and how much does it cost?

With the volatility of the energy market, many suppliers are now offering "capped price" programs to offer some peace of mind, particularly during the typically unstable heating season. It's a great benefit, but be aware of any additional fees and how those impact your overall costs. Consider this: if you use 500 gallons over the course of the winter and pay an additional \$59 to cap your rate, you've essentially added \$.12 to your per gallon rate! You still have price protection, but not at the listed rate.

If the company does offer price protection, be sure to ask if it's a locked-in or capped rate. A capped rate means the price won't go higher, but could go lower depending on market price and a variety of other factors. A locked-in rate means the price won't change.

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

If propane is your primary heating source, your propane partner should be able to utilize specialized computer software programs to accurately estimate your usage based on information you provide about your propane appliances. This allows us to accurately estimate when your tank needs a fill and schedule it accordingly. It's important that you let your propane partner know if you make any lifestyle changes that will significantly affect your usage, such as building an addition onto your home or adding a new propane appliance. Auto-fill programs make your propane service fairly hassle-free!

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

Running out of propane can be a major inconvenience. While most propane companies won't guarantee that you won't run out of gas, they should at least be able to tell you what their reliability rate is. Companies with a reliable auto-fill service should have very high reliability rates for customers enrolled in that program.

**7. What kind of program and payment options are available?**

Many people simply can't afford to pay for an entire propane delivery at one time. A propane partner should offer payment options to help. Whether it's a budget plan or metered propane service, you should have options to help spread out your costs. Additionally, look for a partner that offers convenient payment options such as online payment and automatic bill payment through a designated bank account or credit card. Be sure to ask if there are charges for these conveniences.

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

Safety must be a top priority for any propane partner. It's both illegal and extremely dangerous to operate a propane service without proper certification. Make sure that the employees at your propane partner are trained and certified through a reputable organization, such as the National Propane Gas Association. If they are not, don't do business with them.

**9. Will I be able to reach the company during evening and weekend hours if I have an emergency situation?**

Emergency situations, like a propane run-out in the middle of winter or a gas leak, don't always happen during regular business hours. Some issues just can't wait until the next business day, so look for a partner that has trained personnel available 24/7.



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Propane Supplier:				MEC
Phone Number:				800.492.5989

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

Will Call Rate	\$	\$	\$	1.599
Metered Service Rate	\$	\$	\$	
Cash on Delivery Rate	\$	\$	\$	
Other	\$	\$	\$	

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

			Regular price
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**3. Will I have to pay a delivery fee or other charges?**

Delivery fee	\$	\$	\$	No
Fuel surcharge	\$	\$	\$	No
HAZMAT fee	\$	\$	\$	No
Other fees	\$	\$	\$	No
Can fees be waived?				n/a

**4. Do you offer a price protection program, and how much does it cost?**

Price protection offered				Yes
Capped rate	\$	\$	\$	
Enrollment fee	\$	\$	\$	FREE

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

Autofill available				Yes
Enrollment fee	\$	\$	\$	FREE

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

No run-out guarantee				Yes
Reliability Rate	%	%	%	99.99%

**7. What kind of program and payment options are available?**

Budget plan				Yes
Metered Service Rate				Yes
Online payment				Yes
Automatic bill payment				Yes
Cost to enroll	\$	\$	\$	FREE

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

Trained and certified				Yes
Certified by				NPGA

**9. Will I be able to reach the company during evening/weekend hours if I have an emergency?**

24/7 contact available				Yes
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