

# Safety Warnings



## Purpose

In its continuing quest for safety, REGO® publishes a series of bulletins explaining the hazards associated with the use, misuse, and aging of LP-Gas valves and regulators. It is hoped that these factual bulletins will make clear to LP-Gas dealer managers and service personnel, that the utmost care and attention must be used in the installation, inspection, and maintenance of these products, or problems could occur which would result in injuries and property damage.

The National Fire Protection Association NFPA 58 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code - 2014 Edition states in Section 4 Qualification of Personnel; "Persons whose duties fall within the scope of this code shall be provided with training that is consistent with the scope of their job activities and that includes proper handling and emergency response procedures... Refresher training shall be provided at least every 3 years, initial and subsequent training shall be documented". These "RegO® Safety Warnings" may be useful in training new employees and reminding older employees of hazards that can occur. It is recommended that all employees complete the Propane Education Research Council's Certified Employee Training Program.

## Nature of Warnings

It is recognized that warnings should be as brief as possible, but the factors involved in regulator failures are not simple. They need to be fully understood so that proper maintenance programs can be established. If there is a simple warning, it would be:

Inspect regulators regularly as outlined in this safety warning and replace as required per these recommendations. When all of these recommendations are followed, the recommended service life of an REGO® regulator (except single stage) manufactured after 1995 is 25 years. The recommended service life of all other REGO® regulators is 15 years.

## LP-Gas Regulators

This bulletin applies most particularly to permanent LP-Gas installations of cylinders and tanks. The warnings also apply in most cases to portable installations of recreational vehicles, barbecue grills, etc. This bulletin is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the subject of regulators and certainly does not cover all safety practices that should be followed in the installation and maintenance of LP-Gas systems.

It should not be necessary to remind readers of this bulletin that regulators must be installed in strict conformance with NFPA Pamphlets 54 and 58, and all other applicable codes and regulations. Codes, regulations and manufacturer's recommendations have been developed by experts with many years of experience in the LP-Gas industry.

### Failure to fully follow these codes, regulations and recommendations could result in hazardous installations.

Pamphlet 58 states "All regulators for outdoor installations, except regulators used for portable industrial applications, shall be designed, installed or protected so their operation will not be affected by the elements (freezing rain, sleet, snow, ice, mud or debris). This protection may be integral with the regulator."

### Failed and/or Inoperative Regulators

Failed regulators can cause three kinds of hazards:

- High pressure LP-Gas in a system downstream of the regulator; and
- Leaks of LP-Gas to atmosphere from the regulator itself.
- Loss of pressure due to a "freeze-up" in the orifice.

### High Pressure LP-Gas in a System

Anything that prevents a regulator from regulating properly could result in high pressure gas at the regulator outlet and thus in a system.

**High pressure gas into piping and appliances could cause piping leaks and damage to appliance burner controls with the potential for fires and explosions.**

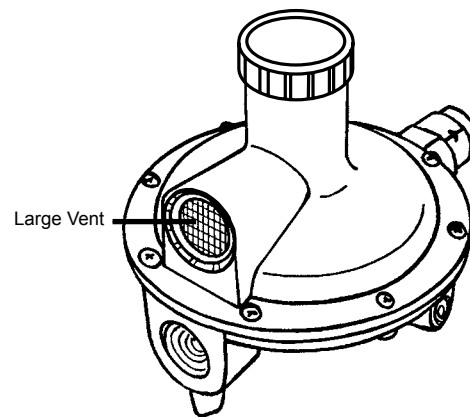
### The Causes of High Pressure Gas in a System are:

#### 1. Regulator vents that are clogged or obstructed.

**Vents must be clear and fully open at all times.**

Many regulators are equipped with a pressure relief valve which discharges to atmosphere through the vent. Ice, snow drifts, dirt, bugs, paint, or other foreign material can clog the vents.

**An obstructed vent may prevent the pressure relief valve from operating properly.**



Regulators should be installed with the vent facing down or protected so their operation will not be affected by the elements. In cases where the regulator vent is equipped with a discharge tube, the outlet of this tube must be facing down. The vents and/or discharge tubes must be protected from the elements and must be equipped with a screen to prevent bugs from obstructing the opening.

**Action Required:** Regulators should be properly installed and regularly inspected when tanks or cylinders are filled. If vents are clogged or the screen is missing, they must be cleaned or replaced. If the vent screen is missing and there is evidence of foreign material around the vent, the regulator should be replaced.

#### 2. Foreign material lodging between the regulator nozzle and seat disc:

**When this occurs, the regulator can remain open, allowing high pressure gas into the system.**

This material can come from system piping between the container shut-off valve and the regulator. Chips created during piping installation or dirty piping can create this hazard. Corrosion inside of copper pigtails and piping can cause problems. This can occur particularly when LP-Gas contains high sulphur or excessive moisture.

**Action Required:** Make sure regulator inlet piping is clean at the time of installation. Periodic checks should be made to assure piping remains clean without corrosion. Never use old pigtails on new LP-Gas installations. Old pigtails can also work harden and crack if they have been bent and twisted several times.

### 3. Wrong regulator installed for the application:

**The proper regulator must be used for each system.**

For example, installation of high pressure regulators not designed to reduce gas pressure to an appliance requirement of 11" w.c. will cause a hazard. Installing a regulator undersized for the load can cause improper combustion at the appliance burner with a potential for carbon monoxide poisoning.

**Action Required:** Make sure the regulator is correct for each application and test the system with a pressure gauge or a manometer.

### 4. Failure to external mechanical parts due to corrosion:

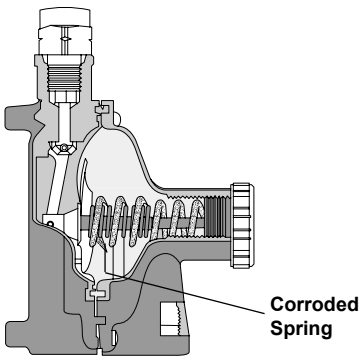
Adjusting springs and relief valve springs can rapidly corrode if exposed to salt air or industrial pollution. Even moisture condensation on these springs can cause them to rust and fail.

**Failure of these springs will result in failure of the regulator to control the pressure.**

With the vent of a regulator facing down, corrosion products from the springs could clog the regulator vent screen blocking the vent.

**Action Required:** Regulator inspection for corrosion should be made according to the guidelines listed below:

- For underground installations subject to submersion, the regulator should be inspected **every** time the container is filled.
- For known corrosive atmospheres of salt air or chemical pollution, the regulator should be inspected at least once a year.

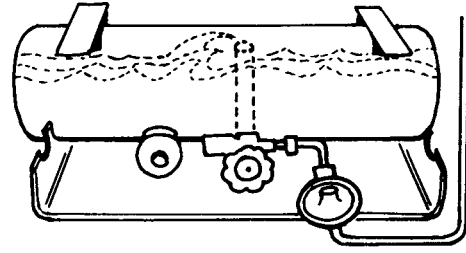


- For other applications, the regulator should be inspected every 3 years. **If any corrosion is evident, replace the regulator.**

It is essential that the regulator bonnet cap be tightly in place at all times to prevent the entrance of water, bugs, dirt, etc. Foreign material can cause the regulator to function improperly with potentially hazardous results.

### 5. Liquid propane in the regulator:

This can occur on recreational vehicles, unless the regulator is installed substantially higher than the container shut-off valve. Here, sloshing propane could get into the regulator with the resulting high pressure downstream of the regulator. It could also occur on stationary installations if the regulator is installed below the shut-off valve and the container is over-filled.



**Action Required:** Be careful of regulator installation and never overfill any LP-Gas container.

### Leaks of LP-Gas to Atmosphere

**While the occurrences of leaking regulators are rare, they can and do occur with a potential for fires and explosions.**

These leaks can be caused by:

1. Corrosion of the relief valve spring or foreign material on the seat disc which causes the relief valve to open, will cause LP-Gas to escape through the regulator vent, as well as permitting high pressure into the system.

**Action Required:** Regulator inspection for corrosion should be made according to the guidelines listed below:

- For underground installations subject to submersion, the regulator should be inspected **every** time the container is filled.
- For known corrosive atmospheres of salt air or chemical pollution, the regulator should be inspected at least once a year.
- For other applications, the regulator should be inspected every 3 years.

**If any corrosion is evident, replace the regulator.**

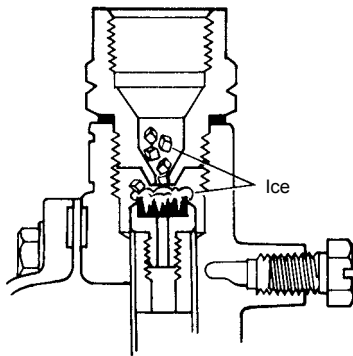
2. Bad piping connections at the regulator inlet and outlet. This can occur at the time of installation where connections are loose or the regulator may have been overstressed by excessive wrenching. It is important that proper wrenches, both on the piping and on the regulator inlet and outlet, be used when connecting the system piping, and that the regulator die cast body is not cracked by wrenching the pipe too deeply into the body.

**Action Required:** Always test for leaks at time of installation and inspect for leaks if there is reason to believe that pipe connections could cause a hazard.

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## Loss of Pressure

Freeze-up inside the regulator.



**This will prevent the regulator from regulating properly.**

Regulator freeze-ups occur because there is excessive moisture in the gas. Freeze-ups can also occur in pigtails that are kinked or bent where free flow of the LP-Gas is restricted. These freeze-ups can occur when the moisture, gas flow and temperature combine to create a hazardous condition. Freeze-ups can occur at temperatures above 32° F.

**Action Required:** All LP-Gas should be checked for moisture content prior to delivery to consumers and proper amounts of anhydrous methanol added if the gas cannot be returned to the supplier. Any container suspected of having excessive moisture should be treated with the proper amount of methanol.

## Customer Safety

Since regulators are often used by consumers without previous knowledge of the hazards of LP-Gas, and the LP-Gas dealers are the only ones who have direct contact with the consumers,

**It is the dealer's responsibility to make sure that his customers are properly instructed in safety matters relating to their installation.**

At the very minimum, it is desirable that these customers:

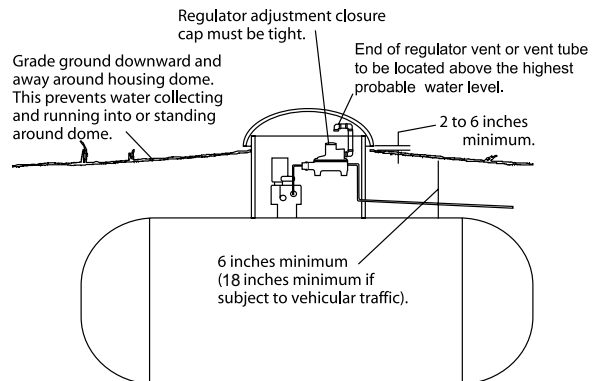
1. Know the odor of LP-Gas and what to do in case they smell gas. Use the NPGA "Scratch 'n Sniff" leaflet.
2. Are instructed to never tamper with the system.
3. Know that when protective hoods are used to enclose regulators and/or valves, that these hoods must be closed, but not locked.
4. Keep snow drifts from covering regulators.
5. Know the location of the cylinder or tank shut-off valve in emergencies.

## Underground Installations

Special hazards can occur if regulators are not properly installed in underground systems. Water, dirt, mud and insects can get into the regulator if the bonnet cap is not tightly in place and the vent is not protected with a proper vent tube, opening above any potential water level.

Most problems occur because the waterproof dome on the buried storage tank does not extend above the ground level sufficiently to keep out water and mud.

Refer to NPGA No. 401.



Note: Water mark left in housing dome at level above regulator vent, or end of vent tube requires replacement of regulator. Then correct installation.

## General Warning

**All REGO® Products are mechanical devices that will eventually become inoperative due to wear, contaminants, corrosion and aging of components made of materials such as metal and rubber. As a general recommendation, Regulators should be replaced in accordance with all of the recommendations outlined in this safety warning. The recommended service life of a regulator is one of many factors that must be considered in determining when to replace a regulator.**

The environment and conditions of use will determine the safe service life of these products. Periodic inspection and maintenance are essential.

Because REGO® Products have a long and proven record of quality and service, LP-Gas dealers may forget the hazards that can occur because a regulator is used beyond its safe service life. Life of a regulator is determined by the environment in which it "lives." The LP-Gas dealer knows better than anyone what this environment is.

NOTE: There is a developing trend in state legislation and in proposed national legislation to make the owners of products responsible for replacing products before they reach the end of their safe useful life. LP-Gas dealers should be aware of legislation which could affect them.