



**Department of Permitting Services**  
**Fire Prevention and Code Compliance**  
 2425 Reedie Dr, 7th Floor, Wheaton, Maryland 20902

**CODE INTERPRETATION/POLICY**

<b>Interpretation Name: Portable LP Gas Fuel Tank Storage</b>		
<b>Code/Year</b> 2018 NFPA 1 <i>Fire Code</i>	<b>Section of Code</b> Chapter 69	<b>Title of Code Section/Subsection</b> Liquefied Petroleum Gases and Liquefied Natural Gases
2015 NFPA 1 <i>Fire Code</i>	Chapter 69	Liquefied Petroleum Gases and Liquefied Natural Gases
<b>Statement/Background of Issue</b>		
<p>The purpose of this policy is to address the storage requirements for small propane gas cylinders outside of commercial establishments, not intended for sale or exchange. As the need to provide heat for outdoor venues and eateries has increased throughout the pandemic, the use of patio heaters and similar temporary installations utilizing small, portable LP gas tanks readily available for purchase at convenience stores and retail locations continues to increase as well. The storage of these tanks by business owners outside of their establishments has caused concern but is a necessary function during the colder months. This policy does not contain all the provisions of the codes related to storage of portable liquefied petroleum or propane gas.</p>		
<p>For any portable LP gas tank, greater than 2.7lbs but less than 120lbs water capacity, not in use, empty, partially used, or filled awaiting use, the following provisions apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A spare tank per appliance, but no more than 20 tanks per building, is permitted to be kept on site. All tanks must be kept outdoors. Where more than two tanks are in a single location that is accessible to the public, they must be kept in a ventilated, lockable metal cabinet.</li> <li>2. Tanks must be protected from extreme temperature rises, physical damage from objects including vehicles, and tampering. Tanks must be stored in the upright position.</li> <li>3. Tanks cannot be stored on roofs, on or under balconies, decks, terraces, or other similar exterior building projections.</li> <li>4. Tank storage must be at least five (5) feet away from seating or gathering areas, exit doors, exit pathways, building openings, and building fire department connections. The distance from seating or gathering areas is to be measured from the nearest edge of the tent, membrane, fencing, or other distinguishable feature of the designated seating area. Tank storage cannot block or encroach upon an egress path, public sidewalk, fire lane, or the path to a fire command center, sprinkler valve room, or fire alarm control room.</li> <li>5. Tank storage must be at least ten (10) feet from any utility meters, power lines, open flame, or fire feature.</li> <li>6. This policy applies to commercial establishments, and not one- and two-family homes. Tanks greater than 120lbs require a General Fire Permit for use or storage.</li> </ol>		
<b>Policy No.</b> FCC 2021-02	<b>Effective Date</b> December 10, 2021	 Rick Merck, Fire Marshal Division Chief, Commercial Construction