

Responding to Interruptions of Service Calls

During these trying days of COVID-19, the propane industry is being faced with the challenge of responding to interruptions of service, or “out-of-gas” calls. Based on the requirements of the 2018 *National Fuel Gas Code* (NFGC), a qualified agency might be required to enter the building and light appliance pilots in order to put the gas appliances back into operation. The employee of the propane company typically would meet the code’s definition of “qualified agency,” though the code does not require the propane company to do so. The propane company should ensure they have a policy regarding how to address “out-of-gas” or “interruption of service” situations during the current COVID-19 health crisis.

To be clear, paragraph 8.2.4 of the *National Fuel Gas Code* states that in order to put the appliances into operation, the following steps must be performed:

- (1) a successful leak check must be completed;
- (2) the piping must be purged of air; and
- (3) the connections to the appliance must be checked for leakage.

To put the appliances into operation, the service technician may have to enter the building to perform steps (2) and (3).

Further to this, paragraph 8.2.3 of the NFGC requires that a leak check be performed on the piping system immediately after the gas has been turned on after an interruption of service. However, the Code does not require the leak check to be conducted from inside the building. For a propane system, the leak check could be performed from outside of the building and Annex C of the NFGC provides different methods that can be used to conduct the leak check.

For more information or questions, contact NPGA's [Bruce Swiecicki](#).