

## Safety Division

### About the LP-Gas Safety Section

In 1939, the State Legislature enacted legislation on the regulation of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), commonly known as butane or propane. Because the Railroad Commission was the principal regulatory agency of the state and it carried responsibility for oil and gas production as well as gas utilities at the state level, it was given this new jurisdiction.

Increasingly in the 1940s, people in the rural areas of Texas were turning from wood and kerosene-burning stoves over to the relatively new liquefied petroleum gas as fuel to cook and heat homes. While those living in the cities had access to piped natural gas, it was seldom economical for gas to be piped to rural areas. LPG in its tanks brought the benefits of gas in an economical and convenient manner.

By 1946, however, safety problems with the highly pressurized tanks had cause insurance rates to skyrocket. The LPG industry sought legislative action to protect the general public and to help reduce those rates. By 1951, the Texas Legislature recognized the need for safety regulation and passed a law mandating the Commission establish LP-Gas safety rules and regulations to protect the health, safety and welfare of the general public. Continually, through the 1950s, the use of liquefied petroleum gas increased. In 1958 and 1959, the International Tractor Company promoted the use of LPG with farm equipment. Today, LP-Gas is available as a "clean fuel" alternative to gasoline or diesel motor fuel, in addition to its many commercial, industrial and residential uses.

The Texas Legislature authorized the Commission to regulate compressed natural gas (CNG) in 1983, and later, liquefied natural gas (LNG). Mass transit bus fleets typically use these fuels, which are also "clean fuel" alternatives to conventional motor fuels. The Safety Division is responsible for promulgating rules governing the safe use and operation of LPG, CNG and LNG motor fuel installations and equipment.

Throughout the State, the LP-Gas inspection staff in the Safety Division routinely performs safety inspections of equipment at LPG, CNG, and LNG facilities to verify and enforce compliance with applicable safety rules. In addition, the staff investigates complaints of rule violations and conduct accident investigations.