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When you call Bergquist, you get your questions answered by the people who **know** propane equipment.



Mike McCoun

Go With the Flow

Propane professionals with a lot of experience and training know there are a variety of factors to consider for a propane vapor system to function safely and properly. Tank

size, line size, and regulator size all need to be considered for the system's BTU load and proper operation. When evaluating a system for proper sizing and installation, a service technician must inspect the entire system (both inside and outside the home or building) to ensure the load is calculated accurately and, more importantly, that it is safe.

Undoubtedly, the single most important test conducted on any propane vapor system is a leak test first and foremost. A propane vapor system should never have gas feeding it that is leaking. It's only after the system passes a leak test that a service technician should check for flow and lockup. Naturally, to conduct a proper leak check, all appliances (including pilot lights if applicable) must be shut off.

After the conclusion of a leak check, the appliances are turned back on to check the flow of the vapor system. This ensures the second-stage regulator is set to the correct pressure to feed the appliances when everything is running. Flow pressure is typically adjusted to 11 to 12 inches of water column (systems may vary based on appliance needs). **It's very important to note: Flow pressure is a pressure check that can be adjusted if needed.** There is some debate about where in the system to check for flow pressure. While many service technicians test at the downstream port of the second-stage regulator, that testing only proves there is pressure at the outlet of the regulator. Proper flow-pressure testing should be done at the appliance furthest away in the piping from the second-stage regulator.

Once flow pressure has been set and appliances have been inspected to ensure proper working order, using the gauge in the system (the same gauge just utilized to check and adjust flow), shut off all appliances and read the gauge.

Lockup is the resulting pressure of a vapor system when flow is stopped. This happens because the lack of vapor flow forces the second-stage regulator to "lock up". Lockup pressure is not a pressure a service technician can set. It is simply the resulting pressure of the stoppage of vapor flow. The opposite of lockup pressure can be considered as droop. Droop is the sudden (and short lived) drop in pressure when appliances are turned back on and the system demands vapor flow. **Again, lockup is not a pressure a service technician can set.**

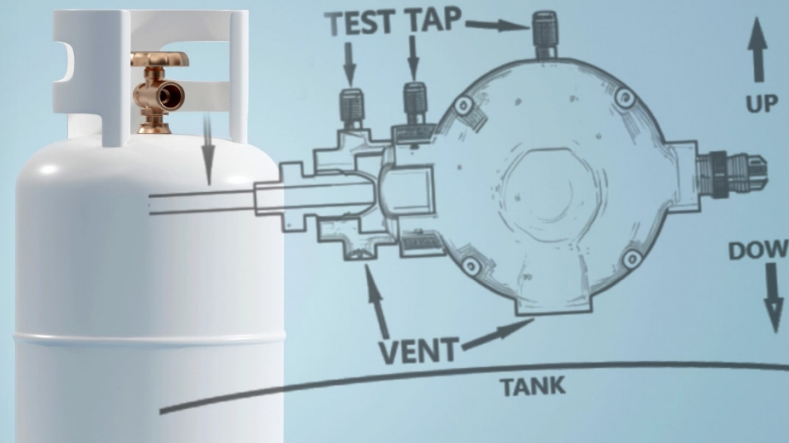
Newer service technicians can easily get confused by the terms "lockup pressure" and "flow pressure". Sometimes service technicians mistakenly use the terms interchangeably. Further confusion arises with understanding the proper procedures to check lockup and flow. Flow is a pressure that can be adjusted to the propane demand for the system - as determined by the system - and no two systems are the same. Many residential vapor systems in close proximity to each other may be very similar, however. Lockup is a pressure check to ensure the system is no more than 20% of working pressure. Undersized interior piping, or undersized copper or polyethylene tubing from propane tank to building (or a combination of both), can cause an increase in lockup pressure.

Checking flow pressure without turning on appliances simply provides the flow necessary to fill the piping. While this may provide an accurate flow some of the time, it is rarely correct. Eventually an irate customer is going to experience no heat coming from their furnace, and their furnace technician informing them there isn't enough vapor pressure being supplied.

I am very fortunate in my career at Bergquist to interact with a variety of propane professionals - both by job position and level of experience. I have often learned, and then instructed others, based on many casual conversations over the years. Once in a while I come across a situation where I share important lessons I've learned. The difference in understanding lockup and flow pressures is very high on that list.

Don't Ignore the Benefits of Tap-Over-Vent Propane Regulators

Scott Gaudet – Published in *Oil & Energy Magazine*
January/February 2025



It may be time to change your old way of doing things, even after 100 years of use

"I know how to install a regulator," you insist. Regulators to control the pressure of propane vapor systems have been around since the commercialization of propane for consumer use. Not a lot has changed regarding how they are installed in more than 100 years.

In a two-stage propane regulator system, second-stage regulators are installed at the building. Regulator installation best practices require positioning regulators with the vent opening aligned horizontally with the ground to prevent the potential buildup of moisture in the regulator. To achieve this, one can position the regulator with the inlet (and thus the regulator vent) pointing downward, or use any number of vent adapters available to reposition the vent, or (as common practice years ago) unscrew the top half of the regulator and turn it to point the regulator vent downward. The last option is frowned upon today, and in most cases prohibited.

Many installers will also put the second-stage regulator under a cover. However, it is still good practice to point the regulator vent down even with a cover. Most service technicians have gone to a customer location and said, "I wonder what happened to that second-stage regulator cover?" at one time or another. There are second-stage regulators that are manufactured with vent-in alternate positions, but most service technicians do not want to carry that much inventory on their trucks.

When first-stage regulators are installed at a propane tank under the tank dome, an estimated 90 percent or more of the installations end with the bottom side of the regulator positioned toward the tank. This results in the top half of

the regulator (the adjustment-cap, or atmospheric side) pointing upward. In an effort to prevent the regulator from accumulating any moisture inside, the installer typically tilts the regulator outlet in a slightly downward position. At this point, most folks that have installed a regulator are nodding their heads agreeing with what they have just read.

There is a much more effective way to install a first-stage regulator on a propane tank, however. Most manufacturers make regulators with vents in a downward position and the regulator test taps positioned upward (see accompanying image). This is typically referred to as "tap over vent". Tap-over-vent regulators have been available for the past 20 years or so.

It comes as no surprise that human nature makes most of us very set in our ways. Change is often met with resistance. Propane service technicians are no different. Why would a service technician want to change the regulator configurations they have always used? They know the item part numbers and their preferred installation method has always seemed to work. In fact, many tap-over-vent regulator (perhaps when ordered by mistake) installations are positioned the way many non-tap-over-vent installations are done.

So why should installers use tap-over-vent first-stage regulators? First, when installed as shown in the image, the pigtail can slope back toward the service valve, thus reducing the chance of debris or moisture accumulating at the inlet orifice. Many service technicians will say they already do that. But, if the first-stage regulator is positioned with the vent slightly downward as most installers typically do, the inlet of the regulator is

then pointing slightly upward creating a "trap" at the inlet. The tap-over-vent regulator configuration allows the inlet of the first-stage regulator to tilt back toward the service valve. This should prevent moisture and debris from accumulating at the regulator orifice, flowing back through the pigtail to the tank instead. The regulator vent still points downward, allowing any moisture to drain out the vent. Plus, as an added bonus, the test taps are pointing outward, allowing an easier connection for pressure testing. Tap-over-vent regulator installations also seem to take up less space under the tank dome, allowing easier access to the fill valve, fixed liquid level valve, and float gauge dial.

Tap-over-vent regulators really are a no-brainer. When properly explained, tap-over-vent first-stage regulators would seem to be a more popular regulator configuration option than standard configurations. Ask your propane equipment distributor to explain the benefits of proper tap-over-vent first-stage regulator installations during your next safety meeting. It is important to note that the tap-over-vent design is the same for twin-stage regulators – which is commonly used in the northeast U.S. Even a seasoned service technician has to admit, "huh, I never thought about that!" after learning the many benefits of tap-over-vent first-stage, or twin-stage, propane regulators.

Scott Gaudet is the Area Sales Manager for Bergquist covering the Northeast. He has almost 4 decades of experience in the propane industry. He can be reached at scott.gaudet@bergquistinc.com.

Bergquist Announces Key Leadership Promotions to Drive Innovation and Growth

Bergquist, a leader in the wholesale propane equipment distribution industry, is proud to announce the promotion of three key team members, marking a significant step in driving growth and innovation across the organization.



Mike Vigliotti Promoted to Customer Success Manager

Veteran Bergquist team member, Mike Vigliotti, has been appointed customer success manager, a newly created position. In this role, Vigliotti will be responsible for working with propane marketers across the U.S. to ensure they're gaining the most benefit from telemetry technology, including the best way to deploy, install and utilize ANOVA UTM and Cavagna Smart Meter analytics to improve overall efficiency with their propane operation.



Amy Berg Named Area Sales Manager and Telemetry Sales Specialist

In her dual role as area sales manager and telemetry sales specialist for the Minnesota/Wisconsin territory, Berg will be responsible for learning propane marketers' organizational pain points and suggesting the appropriate equipment solutions to help overcome them. Additionally, Berg will also be in charge of demonstrating the many benefits of remote tank monitoring and metering to customers in the Central and Mountain Time Zones.



Jim Baker Appointed Territory Sales Specialist

Having previously served as the sales specialist for the Minnesota/Wisconsin territory, Jim Baker was recently promoted to serve as territory sales specialist for the Mid-Atlantic region – Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina and Virginia – where he will meet face-to-face with propane marketers across the area. Additionally, Baker will handle inside sales duties for Bergquist.

“Bergquist is thrilled to recognize the outstanding contributions of Mike, Amy and Jim with these well-deserved promotions,” said Joe Montroy, vice president of sales at Bergquist. “Their deep experience with Bergquist, extensive knowledge of the propane industry and unwavering commitment to exceptional

customer service have been instrumental in our success. We are confident that in their new roles, they will continue to drive innovation, enhance customer experiences and contribute to our company's growth.”

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

Bergquist Bulletin



1100 King Road
Toledo, OH 43617

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1100 King Rd.
Toledo, OH 43617
800-537-7518

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1344 Memphis Junction Rd.
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We're looking forward to seeing you in Nashville in 2026.

We would like to thank everyone who stopped by to visit us at our booth at the 2025 NPGA Southeastern & International Propane Expo in Charlotte, NC in April. Your continued support throughout the year is very much appreciated. We're grateful to have customers, vendors, and industry friends like you.

