

# HAZARD ALERT

## PROPANE LEAK CAUSES WORKPLACE EXPLOSION

*Two daycare workers suffered serious burns when propane gas that had accumulated in the air ignited. They had noticed a propane smell and a lack of hot water from the sink. When they reset a hot water heater breaker in the basement, it caused the flammable gas to ignite.*

*The investigation revealed that there was approximately five centimetres of water on the basement floor. Because the base of the water heater was submerged in water, a safety control valve had corroded, causing a propane build-up in the basement.*

### Recommended Preventive Action

- Propane leaks smell like rotten eggs. Educate workers so they can recognize the smell and know how to respond.
- If you smell propane, if possible, shut the source of the leak; evacuate the premises immediately. Follow up with the fire department and propane supplier.
- Do not allow gas appliances to sit in water. Have a certified technician service the system if you suspect water damage.
- Avoid touching electrical switches or appliances when a leak is suspected.
- Inform workers of the dangers of resetting a breaker inside a control panel. Only allow qualified persons to reset a breaker if live parts are exposed.
- Install a propane detector according to the manufacturer's instruction.
- Any modification or addition to existing gas installations must be done by a certified technician.

