



ABYC Offers Strict Rules for Safe Installation of LPG Systems

The American Boat and Yacht Council has some very specific standards for marine liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) systems, and for good reason. Everything—including the types of hoses, tanks, shutoff valves, and safety elements—is covered in Section A of the ABYC Technical Bulletin for Small Craft (www.abycinc.org).

Marine stores charge an arm and a leg to get the appropriate fittings for a safe propane system, but with the help of a knowledgeable propane dealer, you can devise your own safe system at about half the cost. We covered this topic a while back, and that article “The Complete Propane Appliance System” is online at www.practical-sailor.com/tools/propane_appliances_on_sailboats.html.

The illustration below, adapted from one in Charlie Wing’s excellent illustrated book “How Boat Things Work,” shows the key elements of a well-designed propane system.

Common problems we see in used boats: corroded regulators, lack of a pressure gauge, clogged propane locker drains, propane lockers that aren’t air-tight, overboard drains that are below the waterline on a heel, overboard drain hoses with low spots where gas can collect, a valve or union in the fuel line where it runs through the cabin, tanks without shutoff solenoids near the stove, and burners without flame failure devices, which shut off gas to a burner should the flame extinguish.

PROPER INSTALLATION

