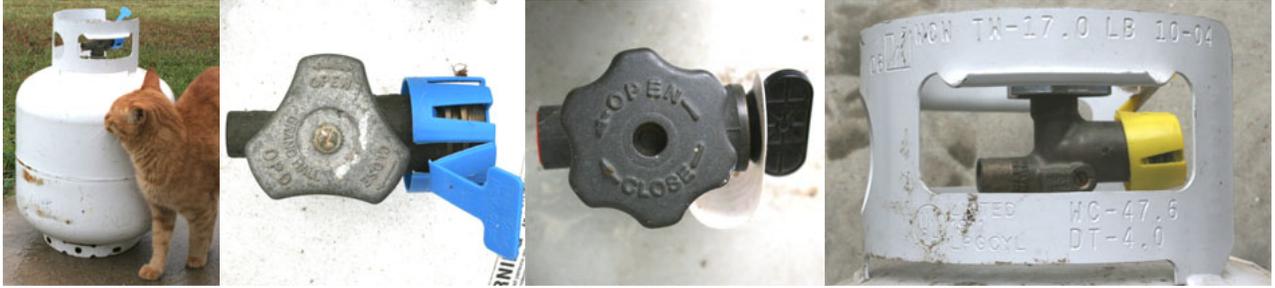


## Propane Tank Know-How!



The photo on the left shows a 20-pound propane tank. These propane tanks are typically used for barbeque grills, etc.

Valves are the first things to know. The second photo shows a new, modern valve. Remember the handle shape: a triangle with the points lopped off. The third photo shows an old valve: basically a circular handle. The old valve could shoot a stream of propane. The new valve won't open unless attached to a fitting on a hose, stove, etc.

No one will refill a propane tank with the old valve. What to do? Go to Wal-Mart and buy a newly filled "Blue Rhino" (brand) propane tank. Give them your tank with the old valve as a trade-in. They don't care about the valve. Alternately, you can get a new valve installed for \$20-\$30, then have your tank pressure tested with the new valve. Tanks are dated when made, need to be pressure tested 12 years later, and every 10 years after that. Check a propane distributor about this.

The last photo shows the top of a propane tank. Here's the trick to knowing how much propane you have in the tank. See the line that says "TW 17.0 LBS 10-04" - TW means "Tare Weight," or what the tank weighs empty. If you weigh the partially filled tank and deduct the tare weight, what's left is the weight of the propane in the tank. Propane weighs 4.24 pounds per gallon. Divide the weight of the propane in the tank, by 4.24, and that's how many gallons are in the tank:

Total weight 34 lbs – Tare Weight 17 lbs = 17 lbs propane. Divide by 4.24 = 4 gallons

4 gallons of propane is the equivalent of 3 gallons of gasoline. There are 8.6 cubic feet of propane per pound, and 36.45 cubic feet per gallon. You do NOT get a full 20 pounds of propane in a newly-filled 20-pound tank. For safety, the tank is not completely filled. Unlike gasoline, propane lasts "forever."

When you put a hose on a propane tank, twist it on backwards. It's a left-hand thread. It's not "Righty-tighty, lefty-loosey." It's just the reverse! After you tighten a propane fitting, always smear liquid around the threads, turn the valve on, and check for any leaks that make bubbles. A propane tank fire could ruin your day!