

Press Release

The Department of the Environment (DOE) has recently noted an increase in the number of applications to operate butane gas depots (mini-plants) throughout the country, particularly in rural areas. The DOE presently has a publication entitled “Environmental Guidelines for Depots and Distribution Outlets for Liquefied Petroleum Gases (LPG)”. However, in an effort to keep updated with the most environmentally friendly technologies and promoting safety in this service industry, the DOE has decided that it is time for these guidelines to be reviewed and, where applicable, revised. Being cognizant that there are several key stakeholders in this industry whom may be affected by any changes to these guidelines, the DOE held a meeting on August 20, 2008 with the participation from Police Department, Belize Defence Force, Western Gas Co. Limited, Belize Gas Co. Ltd., and Gas Tomza Ltd.

A major issue leading up to the meeting was the fact that often times applications for mini-plants in rural areas are made, but when site visits are made to these facilities, most of the time, they are already existent and operational, and in most instances, these facilities are not complying with the established guidelines. Issues of non-compliance relates to setback distances and these plants being located within residential areas. As such, recommendations coming out of the meeting considered different setback distances for mini-plants and bulk storage plants, with setbacks being from property lines, as well as other safety requirements. Furthermore, mini-plants that currently have a licence, but are not in compliance with the new established requirements, will be given a time period to come into compliance.

For more information, please contact the Chief Environmental Officer at the Department of the Environment at 822-2816/2542 or envirodept@btl.net.