

Rethink Your Internal Mailing Process in 2019

By Jerry Schimmel

Are you still sending your annual Duty to Warn safety mailing in-house? You might think that doing this internally saves you money, but there's a more cost-effective and efficient solution. Before you take time out of your company's busy schedule to print safety letters, order Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) brochures, purchase stamps, and stuff envelopes, take a hard look at this comparison to see how a third-party Duty to Warn service can help your company save time and money.

MEETING YOUR OBLIGATION

As a propane marketer, you are the experts that your customers trust for safe, dependable propane service. This responsibility comes with an obligation to provide customer safety information on a yearly basis. Duty to Warn is an industry best practice used by propane companies across the country to keep customers safe, reduce the risk of safety hazards, and avoid litigation. A successful Duty to Warn mailing includes these critical elements:

- **Annual mailing sent consistently without any other materials**
- **An introductory safety letter and recent PERC safety brochure**
- **A third-party verification certificate for company records**
- **Legal counsel and insurance provider approval**

WHAT DOES INTERNAL MAILING REALLY COST?

Producing and sending your annual Duty to Warn internally may seem appealing at first. However, when you examine the actual costs associated with it, it comes down to more than just numbers. Let's look at the facts. In order to send a safety mailing in-house, your company will need:

• **Purchase and Acquisition**

All the materials you need to create and send your safety mailing. This includes envelopes, copy paper, printed PERC brochures, mailing labels, postage, and printer ink, cartridges, tape, fluid, and toner.

• **Facilities**

A place to store equipment and materials. Space to set up your "assembly line" to complete the safety mailing.

• **Production and Labor**

Depending on your office and customer base, you may need to rent or purchase additional production equipment, like laser printers, folding and inserting equipment, a postage meter, and mailing software. The most overlooked part of the internal Duty to Warn process is the cost of time and labor. You will have to take time to train your employees to operate this equipment, taking time away from routine operations for printing, sorting, folding, and inserting. Overtime wages and time lost are significant contributors to the cost of an internal safety mailing process.

• **Postage**

Not only the expense of postage itself, but the time and cost of transportation to and from the post office.

After these expenses, sending an annual Duty to Warn mailing in-house comes with another set of challenges. Your team may be limited by your production equipment, and your budget may suffer losses from unreported overpayment on postage and undeliverable-as-addressed mail. When you lay it all on the table, that's quite a laundry list of valuable time and money spent!

BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Avoid the setbacks of lost time and unnecessarily high cost by using a third-party vendor to send your annual Duty to Warn safety mailing. When you work with a third-party vendor, your safety mailing is taken care of by a professional team with a streamlined process tailored to be efficient and cost-effective. You don't have to worry about purchase and acquisition, facilities, or postage. And most importantly, your employees can dedicate their billable hours to the daily operations you need them for.



**Jerry Schimmel,
P3 Propane LLC**

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BENEFITS OF USING A THIRD-PARTY VENDOR

• Professionally printed materials

Safety mailing produced by a third-party vendor will include professionally printed materials. An introductory safety letter branded for your company will present the information to each customer. Including the latest PERC scratch-and-sniff brochure provides customers with the most current safety information in the industry.

• Printing and postage discounts

Because of the volume at which they work, third-party safety mailing vendors have access to the best prices for printing and postage. This means that your company will receive the most affordable rates for expedited production and mailing of your professionally printed safety mailing.

• Reduced risk of returned mail

Third-party vendors use mailing software to ensure that your customer list is as accurate as possible, which significantly reduces the likelihood of returned mail. Your list will be kept secure and confidential.

• Third-party verification

Receiving a third-party verification certificate is crucial to protect your propane company. You will have documentation stamped with the date and time that your safety mailing was sent to your customer list.

• Approval from legal counsel and insurance providers

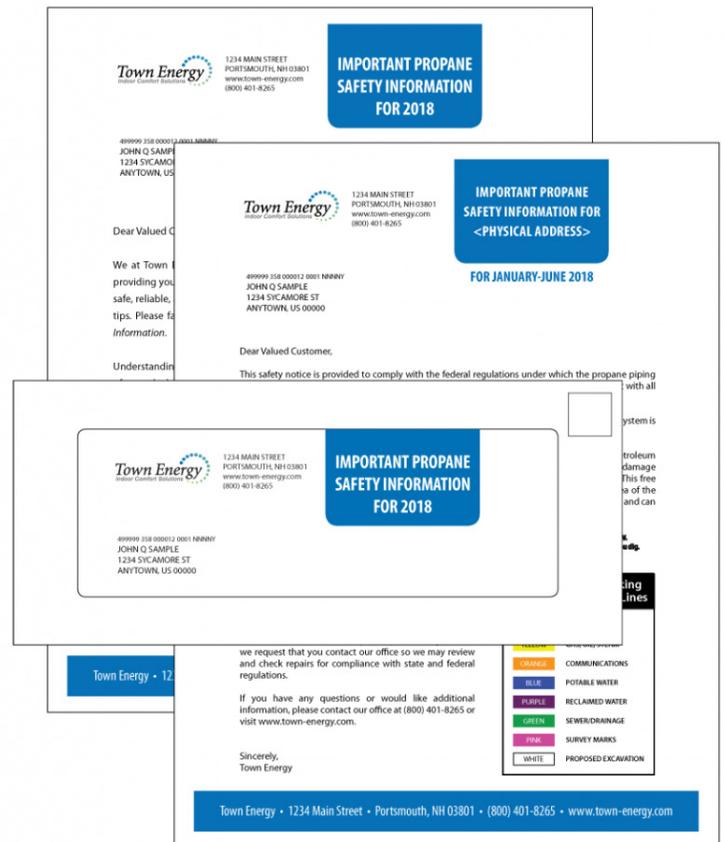
Third-party safety mailing is approved by legal counsel and insurance providers because it provides valuable documentation that your safety mailing was sent. These records may be requested in the event of litigation or an insurance claim.

• Overall efficiency

Using a third-party vendor to send your annual safety mailing makes daily operations at your propane company more cost-effective and efficient. You don't have to worry about spending on additional production hours. Not to mention, external production frees up facility and storage space at your location. Electronic storage of documentation also means easy record keeping and document retrieval.

YOUR SAFETY MAILING PROCESS FOR 2019

So, when you're setting your spending and efficiency goals for 2019—don't forget about your safety mailing! Producing and sending your Duty to Warn internally significantly burdens your company's productivity and budget. Instead, choosing to work with a third-party Duty to Warn safety mailing service can help reduce the risk of safety hazards, maximize operational efficiencies, and protect your company.



Jerry Schimmel is the vice president of P3 Propane Safety. He is responsible for the sales and marketing for the P3 Propane Compliance System, the P3 Duty to Warn Program, and P3 Training and Consulting Services. He can be reached at jerry_schimmel@p3propanesafety.com or (401) 481-2281.