

# What Propane Companies Must Know About 5G

**THE PROMISE** of 5G is that it will finally usher in the era of gigabit speeds for everyone. While most of the consumer market thinks about being able to download games and movies in seconds, there are some big implications for small business as well.

We're still at the very beginning of the 5G era, with each wireless carrier laying out its own plans for what its network rollout will look like. The first cell phones with 5G capability are just coming out – an indication that it's time to start paying attention to what this new era of mobility will bring.

## What 5G Will Do

Many focus on speed when it comes to 5G, and that is an important part of the equation. While the promise of gigabit speeds is exciting, one of the main transformative changes that 5G will bring is reduced communication delays.



Latency is how much time it takes for a data packet to get from one point to another. The more latency can be reduced, the better the many devices online can communicate. This will be important for businesses that rely on IoT (internet of things) technology, connecting multiple devices and sensors

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to provide insight into business operations and product placement, and to communicate data about business operations. According to one report from there will be 18 billion IoT devices by 2022, with 1.5 billion of them operating on cellular connections.

Many in the industry are speaking of 5G as a significant leap forward for application types such as augmented reality and virtual reality, which will be able to operate with greater efficiency. These applications, along with gaming and rapid download of large files, are often reserved for a Wi-Fi connection currently, but 5G has the potential to make this technology work for many use cases and expand what businesses can do.

## State of the Networks 4G Vs 5G

Along with higher speeds, some underlying technology makes 5G unique. For example, regulators have opened new, unused bands known as millimeter waves. The power and equipment constraints made it so transmissions on these bands weren't feasible with previous technology. It's said that typical speed could be 10 times faster than 4G.

All the major wireless networks have chimed in with their plans for 5G. That said they will be rolling out their network enhancements incrementally market after market. In addition to these American stalwarts: Verizon, At&T, T-Mobile/Sprint, it's expected that we will see many private and public companies involved in this enticing build out across North America helping expedite its process.

Expect to hear more details through the year as the different wireless providers compete to offer the more powerful or expansive 5G network. It will be a major play for customers, with each company projecting itself as the keeper of the future of mobile technology.

## How 5G Will Change Devices

With more dependable connections, some believe, there may be a reversal in the trend of devices with greater onboard memory to ones with less memory as we move data to cloud storage, which will be much more accessible with 5G. This may affect the prices of mobile devices positively, since there will be less need for physical storage.

We will see all the major carriers release 5G phones with faster and faster data transmission speeds able to download an entire movie within seconds. We should expect other equipment manufacturers to make announcements about their own offerings.

## 5G Effects on the Propane Industry

Beyond consumer electronics, low latency will be key for new innovations in the tech industry, including artificial intelligence and automation. 5G will enable tech services to perform mission-critical operations. More tech companies globally suggest that 5G technology is critical to their plans for self-driving vehicles, with 5G technology key to their success. In scenarios of constant connection to a network, such as digital maps and security, the self-driving vehicles of the near future will rely on strong 5G connections to work.

For the propane industry we can imagine a day when every tank is reporting how much propane it has in almost real time wirelessly to a cloud server that is tracking and automatically creating optimized routes that are then (like Uber) sent automatically to drivers smartphones so they can immediately jump into a truck and deliver without the need for an office or dispatcher. We can also imagine those same smartphones the drivers, techs, managers, and sales reps have with a propane app that allows them to see each other's work, handle all paperwork, conduct all training, scheduling and more (check out TankSpotter.com the leader in this space) thereby optimizing all field operations and documentation. Every customer will be able to reach their propane company via that company's propane app and the company will be able to reach them with push notifications, special offers, winter warnings, and other critical communications (See the

CustomFuelApp.com for a glimpse into what your competitors are launching this year).

## Bottom-Line

As telecom companies continue to build up the 5G network infrastructure, it's time for businesses to think about how 5G will impact them and how they can take advantage of it. 5G will be key to optimizing every business, reducing costs, connecting with customers, and automating work and training for all employees. It's important to start planning how it will affect your workforce and how you do business. Companies that embrace it are destined for improved profits, ability to do more with fewer people, fewer trucks and in a way that better connects with a growing customer base that will be more and more familiar with and expectant of the improved customer experience they will be able to get from companies who leverage the benefits of 5G.

Ultimately, 5G makes big promises for the types of devices and experiences that technology can deliver. Depending on the type of small business you have, this can make a big difference for how you work or connect with customers. No matter how the hype pans out, it's quite likely this will be a necessary improvement to mobile network latency and speed. So, it's time to think about how to make this future work for you and your business.

*[Editor's Note: The Canadian government is still wrestling if it should allow Huawei's 5G into Canada. Their 5G is banned in the United States and Australia while the other Five Eyes countries — New Zealand, England, and Canada continue studying the issue.]*



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