

# BUS CHAT



## Electric or Propane in Your Next Bus Conversion?

**Post by:** Gary Hatt - Publisher BCM

If you were to convert a bus from scratch, would you include Propane in your build, or build an all-electric Bus Conversion?

My 1967 Eagle, converted in 1996, was built as an all-electric bus. There is no propane onboard. After dealing with filling propane tanks for the past 35 years in bus conversions and other types of RVs, I really like the idea of not having to deal with the hassle of propane.

With electric appliances becoming more energy efficient, going all-electric makes much more sense than it did 31 years ago when BCM was started. With Lithium Batteries and Solar Panels, it now makes sense to utilize the real estate on the roof of a bus to power electric appliances, which would have been very expensive and very heavy 31 years ago.

When I was traveling down the East Coast after 9/11, there were tunnels that I had to stop at before entering to turn off my propane tanks in order to pass through. Once on the other side, I could turn my propane tanks back on, but finding a place to pull over on the other side was not always possible, so I frequently had to travel several miles before I could turn my propane back on so my refrigerator would work again.

Finding and getting to a propane service location such as Flying J, was a bit of a hassle too. Especially with a 40' bus with a Toad, and even more difficult when traveling

off the main highway. I have decided that removable portable tanks were much easier, which I had in my MC-9. I could remove them when they became empty and there were many more options for filling them, so if I ever decide to have propane on board again, I would go with portable tanks instead of a built-in tank due to the ease of refilling them.

My Eagle has an Aqua-Hot heating system that runs on diesel fuel and heats my bus with three radiator-type heaters with fans located in the front, middle, and rear of the bus, controlled by three different thermostats. It heats the bus very well, even in very cold weather.

My water is heated using the same system, and I can even pre-heat my engine with this same system on a cold winter day. Therefore, this is another reason I do not need Propane on board.

The Aqua-Hot system is fueled out of the same fuel tank as the main engine, and my generator, so I only have to deal with one type of fuel on board, and I have to stop for fuel quite frequently anyway, so by my heating system and generator running on diesel, it is one-stop shopping.

Another consideration is that we have all seen many RVs and some buses explode or catch fire due to propane accidents. Explosions do not happen with diesel fuel, fires do, but usually not sudden explosions with no warning.

So, the question is, if you were to convert another bus from scratch, and you did not have any appliances or diesel heaters to start with, would you build it to use Propane, or would the new bus conversion be all-electric?

**Post by:** dtcerrato

We enjoy both but mostly propane. We do a lot of boondocking, and propane serves us best. We've been in the predominantly propane mode since 1973 without issue. All our tanks are portable; four 30lb. cylinders,