

MEDIA STATEMENT

Thursday, 3 June 2010

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) issues this important safety advice on the use and care of gas heaters.

- Appliances must be serviced, checked and regularly maintained by a licensed or registered gasfitter every two years at least.
- Gas heaters must be checked to make sure they are safe before winter.
- Owners of properties with gas heaters must be aware of the possibility of the presence of carbon monoxide (CO), and the risks it poses.
- Faulty, unserviced gas heaters can cause carbon monoxide to be produced. If carbon monoxide spills into the room because of a range of issues including an obstruction in the flue terminal or the ventilation is inadequate, carbon monoxide poisoning may occur.
- Carbon monoxide is invisible and has no smell or taste.
- A blue flame burning within the heater is normally an indication of a good flame, but the gasfitter must have a combustion analyser / detector to detect and measure CO and either carbon dioxide or oxygen to confirm that the combustion is good. A yellow or sooty flame indicates a faulty heater.
- Small children are more susceptible to CO poisoning than adults.
- The gasfitter must have a carbon monoxide (CO) analyser / detector that has been calibrated correctly in the required time frame to detect CO. The CO reading must be less than 10 parts per million (ppm).
- CO can build up in a small room such as a bathroom or toilet very quickly if the spillage is excessive and there's no ventilation. For a larger room such as a living room, it would take longer for the CO to build up if CO spillage is excessive and there's no ventilation.
- It is essential to ensure adequate flowing ventilation through a property even if the heater is working properly. Doorways and windows should never be sealed up.
- There have been six known deaths in Victoria (excluding the Mooroopna tragedy which is under Coronial investigation) from CO poisoning in the last few years.
- ESV is also aware of countless near misses where people have nearly died from carbon monoxide poisoning.
- There have been instances where people suffering from CO poisoning have not been appropriately diagnosed by their doctor . Not all doctors are fully aware of the symptoms of CO poisoning.

Further information:

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