



Carbon Monoxide - the silent killer

In October 2006 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issued a warning about the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. As the cold weather approaches, it has urged homeowners and landlords to ensure that their gas appliances are safe to use.

Geoffrey Podger, HSE Chief Executive, said: “Fuel gas is safe, but if appliances are not properly installed and adequately maintained by a competent CORGI-registered installer, the gas may not burn properly meaning CO fumes are released . Approximately 20 people die each year from CO poisoning associated with gas appliances, a figure that could be reduced if people understood the risks and took sensible precautions.”

You cannot see, smell or taste CO fumes leaving anyone exposed feeling unwell. In the worst situations, CO can kill without warning in just hours.

In addition to getting appliances checked, it is also important to ensure they are used correctly. When used, appliances must have access to a good supply of fresh air: CO is produced when there isn't enough air for complete burning of the fuel.

Moreover, never use a gas appliance if you think it's not working properly. Signs to look out for on boilers, fires and cookers include:

- yellow or orange flames (except for fuel-effect fires which display this colour flame);
- soot or stains around the appliance; and
- a pilot light that frequently blows out.

Approved CO detectors are strongly recommended, although these must not be used as a substitute for regular checks and servicing by a CORGI-registered installer.

Symptoms of CO poisoning can include tiredness, drowsiness, headaches and breathlessness. If you believe CO may be causing you problems seek urgent medical advice.

For further information please contact Mulgas Limited

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