

SAFETY ALERT

August 2008

DO NOT USE OUTDOOR GAS APPLIANCES INDOORS

Gas safety regulator, Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) stresses the importance of never using outdoor gas appliances such as patio heaters and BBQs indoors.

The warning follows the death of a 33-year-old man in a unit behind a property in the Melbourne suburb of Altona Meadows in July 2008.

ESV is assisting Victoria Police with inquiries into the death, which is not believed to be suspicious.

Initial investigations indicate the victim died after using an outdoor table top patio heater which emitted carbon monoxide and consumed the oxygen inside the unit.

ESV took possession of the heater from the Police to arrange for tests to be conducted on it by an independent laboratory. Tests have revealed the heater was not operating correctly.

Investigations have found that the unit had been well sealed with an expansion foam to prevent draughts. The gas cylinder for the heater was located outside the unit and a hole had been drilled in a wall for the connecting hose.

The Director of Energy Safety, Mr Ken Gardner, said that ESV constantly warns the community that appliances manufactured for outdoors must never be used inside properties.

"Unfortunately deaths continue to occur because people are oblivious to the dangers of using outdoor appliances indoors, deliberately ignore the advice for reasons only known to themselves or take a risk thinking nothing can happen to them.

"The condition of the heater and whether it was faulty or not is irrelevant in these circumstances. Outdoor appliances must never be used indoors. It's that simple. It is too dangerous.

"Death could just as easily have occurred if the heater was functioning properly.

"No matter how cold or uncomfortable it might be, it's a very dangerous practice to use outdoor heaters and BBQs inside and must never be contemplated.

"Outdoor gas appliances are for outdoor use. Apart from using up the oxygen in the confined space of a property there is also the danger they will cause fires," said Mr Gardner.

ESV – 1800 800 158 or www.esv.vic.gov.au