

MEDIA RELEASE
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Deaths prompt new warning about gas appliances

The tragic death of a NSW couple from suspected carbon monoxide poisoning last weekend has prompted renewed calls for people to take care using gas heating appliances this winter.

The couple was found deceased after using a woodchip heater to keep warm overnight in an unventilated cabin.

Victoria's Director of Energy Safety, Paul Fearon, said winter is the most dangerous time for carbon monoxide poisoning as people rely on gas heaters to keep warm.

"Gas heaters are safe if maintained and used correctly, but if not, they pose a risk of death or serious illness caused by carbon monoxide poisoning," said Mr Fearon.

Carbon monoxide is a silent killer that you can't see, taste or smell. It can leak from faulty gas heaters that are not working properly or it can build up if gas appliances are being used without adequate ventilation.

Remember these golden rules to stay safe this winter:

- Gas burning appliances need fresh air to operate correctly so ensure adequate ventilation
- Never use outdoor gas appliances such as portable heaters, patio heaters or barbecues indoors
- Never use a gas cooker as a heater
- Ensure your gas appliance has a bright blue flame – a yellow gas flame usually means poor combustion

The warning comes less than a fortnight after the launch of a new campaign titled Cold Feet that reminds Victorians to have their gas heaters serviced every two years by a registered gasfitter.

The Cold Feet commercial is currently screening in cinemas and on television to spread the message that carbon monoxide poisoning can happen in any home or building, even newer ones, if gas heaters are not regularly serviced.

"Find a gasfitter in your local area through the local paper, online or in the Yellow Pages and book them to service your gas heater.

"When you book the service tell them that you need them to check for carbon monoxide leakage and make sure they have the right equipment to do so," said Mr Fearon.

"All types of gas heaters, including wall units, space heaters and ducted central heating units should be serviced every two years by a registered gasfitter."

More safety tips can be found at www.esv.vic.gov.au

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For further information or to arrange an interview:
Michelle Robertson, Energy Safe Victoria Tel: 03 9203 9743 or 0408 634 833