

# Media Release

Energy Safe Victoria and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)

31 May 2022

## Family safe after an open flued gas heater carbon monoxide scare

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) and Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) are calling on Victorians to ensure their open flued gas heaters are serviced at least once every two years, after an Elwood family were exposed to potentially fatal carbon monoxide.

Eight firefighters attended the Dickens Street unit just after 9pm on Wednesday, 11 May after a carbon monoxide alarm prompted the family of three to evacuate the house. No injuries or illnesses were sustained.

Fire crews investigated the unit in breathing apparatus and using a hand held carbon monoxide detector, found very high levels of carbon monoxide.

Both ESV and FRV are investigating a range of causes of the incident, including a heater installed in a nearby apartment.

ESV supports the use of a carbon monoxide alarm as a useful back up however, they should never replace regular servicing. More importantly, gas heaters need to be serviced by a gasfitter endorsed to carry out Type A appliance service work at least once every two years.

People with open flued gas heaters should also ensure there is some ventilation in the room, and should not run extraction fans at the same time as the heater. Extraction fans can create a negative pressure environment, where potentially toxic exhaust gasses can be sucked out of the heater into living spaces.

For more information on carbon monoxide safety go to [www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)

### ESV Commissioner and Chairperson Marnie Williams

*“Open flued gas heaters are a cheap effective source of heating but they must be serviced by a gasfitter endorsed to carry out Type A appliance service work at least once every two years.”*

*“The threat of carbon monoxide poisoning is real. This family in Elwood is very lucky they got a warning from a carbon monoxide alarm, but remember an alarm cannot be a substitute for regular servicing.”*

### FRV Deputy Commissioner Community Safety Michelle Young

*“Carbon Monoxide is a colourless and odourless poisonous gas which can be produced by gas heaters which are not burning effectively. Servicing of gas heaters by a registered gasfitter at least once every two years is the best way to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.”*

### Media Contacts

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