

## Media Release

May 9th 2017

### STAY WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER – CHECK YOUR HEATER

With shorter days and cooler nights, it's time to turn on the heater. It's also time to make sure it's safe.

Poorly maintained gas heaters can omit potentially deadly carbon monoxide gas and unlike the smell of scorched summer dust on radiator bars, it's odourless and colourless.

“Carbon monoxide poisoning or the ‘silent killer’ can be caused by a lack of servicing or a blocked flue or chimney” said Joseph Genco, the Victorian Building Authority’s (VBA) Director of Technical and Regulation.

The VBA and co-building industry regulator Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) recommend gas heaters are serviced and checked every two years while solid fuel heaters should be given the once-over every 12 months.

Inspections and maintenance to both types of heaters need to be performed by a licenced and registered plumber.

“Heating systems, particularly older units, can be very dangerous if not handled correctly, so householders need to get an appropriately qualified practitioner with the correct equipment to test for carbon monoxide spillage, said Mr Genco.

“Wood heaters that have not been cleaned and maintained properly, present the added risk of flue/chimney fires with the possibility of combustible materials such as built up creosote (wood tar), twigs and other debris catching fire.”

It's illegal for an unlicensed or unregistered person to service or repair their own gas heaters.

“Heater manufacturers and appropriately licensed or registered practitioners conduct installation and servicing so warranties can be honoured.”

Consumers should always ask to see their plumber's licence or registration card, which shows the classes of plumbing work the practitioner is registered or licensed to do.

In addition, you can check your plumber is registered or licensed by going to the ‘Find a Practitioner’ tab at [www.vba.vic.gov.au](http://www.vba.vic.gov.au)

- Where the value of the work is in excess of \$750, including parts and labour, the Plumber must issue the consumer with a Compliance Certificate ( [www.vba.vic.gov.au](http://www.vba.vic.gov.au) )

- Electrical work related to heaters requires an electrician licensed by ESV. *Check the electrician's licence and insist that an ESV Certificate of Electrical Safety is issued when the work is complete.*
- The ESV website ([www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)) also allows consumers to check the accreditation of both licensed electrical inspectors and registered electrical contractors.
- Only licensed or registered plumbing practitioners and licensed electrical inspectors and registered electrical contractors have the necessary qualifications to conduct heating work and have the appropriate insurance.

The ESV website ([www.esv.vic.gov.au](http://www.esv.vic.gov.au)) has more information on carbon monoxide poisoning.

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