

'Silent killer' warning for homes this winter

Winter brings the deadly risk of carbon monoxide poisoning for Victorian homes, as gas heaters are switched on to beat the chill.

The Victorian Building Authority (VBA) is reminding residents to hire a licensed or registered plumber to service their gas heaters before putting their lives at risk.

The VBA's State Building Surveyor Andrew Cialini said that despite increasing awareness of the risks posed by gas heaters in homes, tragic incidents of carbon monoxide poisoning continue.

"Sadly, each winter sees stories of serious poisonings, close calls and worse as the silent killer of carbon monoxide poisoning strikes homes across Victoria," Mr Cialini said.

"Residents are reminded to get gas heater appliances serviced regularly (once every two years) and discuss the danger of faulty or poorly maintained indoor gas heaters with plumbers."

At one home in Sale, a glass fronted gas log fire heater was found to have a carbon monoxide leak resulting in the disconnection of the heater and issuing of a warning notice.

Efforts to repair the leak failed and the heater was safely uninstalled and removed by the licensed plumber.

The VBA has [consumer resources on carbon monoxide](#) safety and the proper servicing of gas heating appliances.

Gas heating appliances must be serviced by specialist plumbers called gasfitters, who are registered or licensed in Type A appliance servicing work.

Consumers should ask gasfitters for their registration and licence details, which can also be confirmed on the VBA website, and after they have done the servicing work the gasfitter must provide a compliance certificate if the total value of the work is \$750 or more.

As part of servicing a gas appliance, the gasfitter will test for carbon monoxide spillage and negative pressure – two key risks for carbon monoxide poisoning.

If the gasfitter identifies carbon monoxide spillage it must be rectified immediately as exposure can put lives at risk. The appliance may need to be repaired or disconnected.

Consumers can use the VBA's [Find a practitioner](#) tool to find the right kind of gasfitter.