

Carbon monoxide awareness alert

With winter here, gas heaters across Victoria are in high use.

As recent incidents involving carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning remind us, the safety of the Victorian community should be our number one priority as registered or licensed plumbers.

The [Victorian Building Authority](#) (VBA) and [Energy Safe Victoria](#) (ESV) recommend gas heaters be serviced at least once every two years. Servicing should always include testing for spillage of combustion products.

The VBA urges all appropriately registered or licensed plumbers to follow the latest testing procedures when servicing open-flued gas appliances.

We also recommend all registered or licensed plumbers know and understand the limitations of their testing equipment. This is the way to keep you and your customers safe.

Remember, when testing gas heaters:

1. Check internal and external site conditions on the day.
2. Establish whether a negative pressure environment exists – as this can have serious impacts on gas appliances.
3. At the completion of work, test for spillage of combustion products.

Always use the latest information when testing for combustion product spillage (CO)

ESV issued [updated guidelines](#) for combustion product spillage (including CO) testing in June 2016 (version 06/16). If you attended training prior to 2016, we strongly recommend that you refresh your knowledge of the updated requirements by attending one of the [upcoming CO testing courses](#) delivered by Master Plumbers.

For more information on CO testing, refer to ESV's [Gas Information Sheet No. 38](#), *Using Carbon Monoxide Detection Equipment to Check Gas Appliances for Spillage*.

Use the right equipment, correctly

Having the correct equipment is vital. Carbon monoxide detectors or portable gas analysers indicate the presence of CO in parts per million, so it is important to maintain, handle and store your equipment with care.

Always read the operating instructions and ensure the equipment is correctly calibrated. Please be mindful that most pieces of equipment have temperature limitations which, if breached, may give a false reading or damage or destroy the measurement cell.

Further information is available from ESV's [Gas Information Sheet No. 37](#), *Carbon Monoxide Measuring Equipment*.

Look out for your own exposure

Gasfitters should always be aware of their own safety, even though it is unlikely they will be exposed to CO on every job they attend. Exposure to low levels of CO is possible at times.

For more information on safe working levels of carbon monoxide, refer to ESV's [Gas Information Sheet No. 44](#).

Sign up to a CO testing course

Due to a high level of demand, Master Plumbers will announce the next round of its carbon monoxide (CO) training soon.

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Presented in partnership with the VBA and ESV, these free courses will provide plumbers with the skills and knowledge needed to correctly use CO testing equipment and successfully complete the testing procedure for CO emissions.

For more information, or to book your place, phone 03 9356 8902 or email training@plumber.com.au.

Where can you find more information?

For more information on carbon monoxide, visit the [Energy Safe Victoria](#) website or call the gas technical enquiries line on 1800 652 563.

To contact the VBA, use our [online form](#) or call 1300 815 127.