Media Release

It’s time to have your gas and solid fuel heaters serviced ready for winter

The end of daylight saving and the advent of some cold nights reminds all Victorians that it is time to check when they last had their gas or solid fuel heater serviced.

The Victorian Building Authority’s (VBA) Director of Technical and Regulation, Jarrod Edwards, said the VBA and Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) recommend that gas heaters are serviced and checked by an appropriately registered or licensed plumbing practitioner at least every two years. Solid fuel heaters should be checked by appropriately licensed or registered plumbing practitioners every 12 months.

“Well maintained and serviced heaters of all types ensure they operate safely and contribute to efficiency, comfort and sustainability,” Mr Edwards said.

“Poorly serviced gas and wood heaters put occupants at great risk from the ‘silent killer’, carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is an odourless, colourless gas that can be caused by a lack of heater servicing or a blocked flue or chimney. The ESV website (www.esv.vic.gov.au) has more information on carbon monoxide poisoning.

“Wood heaters have the added risk of potentially causing flue fires with the possibility of combustible materials such as creosote, twigs and other debris building up in flues and catching fire.”

Mr Edwards said householders must not try to clean or service their gas heaters themselves – it is illegal for an unlicensed or unregistered person to undertake heater repairs. Heater manufacturers require that an appropriately licensed or registered practitioner conducts the installation and servicing in order for warranties to be honoured.

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

“It is best to schedule regular gas heater servicing by a plumbing practitioner – every two years is recommended,” Mr Edwards said.

Consumers should always ask to see their plumber’s licence or registration card, which shows the classes of plumbing work the person is registered or licensed to do. In addition, you can check that your plumber is registered or licensed by going to the ‘Find a Practitioner’ tab on the VBA website (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.

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) 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.

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