Battle against deadly CO poisoning from gas heaters heading to Melbourne

A statewide program to enhance the skills of plumbers who install and service gas heaters, ensuring households are not at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning, heads to Melbourne next week.

Training sessions will be held in Melbourne on Monday, 27 August and Tuesday, 28 August.

The Victorian Building Authority, along with Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) and Master Plumbers, will host a series of training sessions providing expert advice to registered and licensed gasfitters and Type A servicing plumbers on the latest techniques to accurately test for carbon monoxide spillage and identify negative pressure situations.

Almost 1900 gasfitters have already registered for the eight free training sessions being held in Melbourne early next week, but some places are still available across the two days.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Building Authority, Sue Eddy, said the VBA was pleased to be working with ESV and Master Plumbers to deliver these training sessions, which will be held throughout the state.

“This roadshow is the largest plumber training program ever undertaken by the VBA,” Ms Eddy said.

“We invite all 21,000 plumbers registered or licensed in gasfitting and Type A servicing to take this opportunity to enhance their training, build on their confidence and protect the safety of Victorians.”

Effective testing and maintenance of gas appliances is an important way of managing risks related to carbon monoxide spillage and other factors that might impact their safe operation. All gas heaters have the potential to spill or leak deadly carbon monoxide. This includes central heating units, space heaters, wall furnaces and decorative log fires.

These safety precautions are particularly important as Victorian homes change and become better weather sealed and more energy efficient. The VBA and ESV recommend that all gas water heaters, space heaters and central heaters are serviced at least every two years by a registered or licensed gasfitter or a Type A servicing plumber.

Training seminars have already been held in Bairnsdale, Wodonga, Shepparton, Traralgon, Mildura, Bendigo, Ballarat, Horsham, Warrnambool and Geelong at no cost to practitioners.

Training seminars will be held in Melbourne at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 7am Monday morning until 7pm on Tuesday evening.

As part of ongoing training for all Victorian gasfitters and Type A servicing plumbers, the VBA, along with ESV and Master Plumbers, has released a short instructional video on negative pressure and carbon monoxide spillage, as part of its new Carbon Monoxide Safety Program. The video provides a step-by-step guide to conducting a carbon monoxide spillage test, demonstrates how to recognise and combat negative air pressure, and provides safety tips for practitioners who carry out these important tests.

Practitioners and their apprentices can register for a training session by visiting the Victorian Building Authority’s website vba.vic.gov.au/training or calling 1300 815 127.

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