



Public Safety Tips
Furnaces and Chimneys

Cleaning furnaces and chimneys reduces risk

An improperly cleaned or serviced gas furnace can result in leaking gas and, ultimately, carbon monoxide poisoning. Wood stoves and fireplace chimneys experience creosote build-up which can cause chimney fires or carbon monoxide seeping back into the home. The BC Safety Authority recommends the following:

- Have heating appliances inspected annually and cleaned as often as necessary. This includes gas furnaces, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces and chimneys. Oil-burning furnaces should be serviced annually.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning and fires are the main hazards caused by improper cleaning or servicing of heating equipment. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a particular threat in energy-efficient houses because they are so tightly sealed. Carbon monoxide detectors can help, but bedroom windows should be left slightly open for ventilation all year long.
- Choose a licensed gas contractor to service furnaces and chimneys. Only a qualified gas fitter should service gas furnaces and appliances. Consumers should ask the service person for proof of certification.
- Indications of the presence of carbon monoxide include:
 - People experiencing flu-like symptoms including dizziness, fatigue, headache, vomiting or nausea.
 - Dying house plants.
 - Discoloration or soot build-up on heating appliances, the fireplace or at warm-air outlets.
 - Loose, disconnected, rusted or water-streaked vents on the chimney.

For further information:

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