



Public Safety Tips  
Natural Gas and Propane

## **Reduce heating costs, not safety**

As the price of natural gas and propane heating fuels increase, many British Columbians are taking measures to reduce the impact of higher energy costs.

Improving the energy efficiency of your home without making sure you have proper ventilation for natural gas and propane heating appliances can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Improved caulking, weather stripping, insulation and windows are installed to prevent drafts and reduce air leakage. Such measures “tighten” a home reducing energy use but when tightening up your home, adequate ventilation for combustion heating appliances must be ensured.

Carbon monoxide is created when fuel is burned. It is colourless and odourless and if trapped inside a home can cause headaches, nausea, drowsiness, impaired judgement, and even death.

Never burn solid or liquid fuels in a gas fireplace or connect a wood stove to a gas appliance vent. Gas fireboxes and vents are not designed for the higher temperatures produced by other fuels.

The following safety advice can reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning in an energy-efficient home:

- The safe operation of any fuel-burning appliance requires an adequate supply of air for combustion and effective venting of the products of combustion to the outdoors.
- If an alternate air supply is not available, fireplace chimneys or gas appliance vents can reverse, causing downdrafts. The products of combustion, like carbon monoxide, can spill back into the home. Opening a window at or below the level of the heating appliance can make sure combustion air is available.
- Never block off combustion air supply ducts and keep vents and chimneys clear.
- Check for condensation on windows. Condensation can be a sign of poor ventilation.

- Use gas appliances only for their intended purpose. Never use a cooking range for space heating or portable propane camping equipment inside a home.
- A licensed gas contractor can check your gas appliances, vents and combustion air openings to ensure safe and reliable operation.

The BC Safety Authority regulates the safe design, manufacture, installation, operation and repair of propane and natural gas equipment. The Authority works with representatives from the gas industry, to increase public awareness of gas safety issues.

**For further information:**

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