

Dear Owner/Occupier,

RE: TYPE A OPEN FLUED GAS APPLIANCE INSPECTION AND SERVICE

Your Type A gas appliance was serviced on _____

During the inspection, a Type A open flued gas appliance was found to be installed in a living space subject to negative pressure.

Negative pressure is created when extraction fans (including kitchen rangehoods) remove air from the building more quickly than it can be replenished. When this happens, air can be drawn back down an open flued appliances flue, causing combustion products to enter the living space (instead of being vented outside as they should be).

Carbon monoxide

Combustion products contain carbon monoxide (CO), a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas that can cause death or chronic illness. Several recent incidents of CO poisoning from open flue gas space heaters (OFGSHs) have led Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) and the Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC) to maintain safety awareness programs for all Victorian households and gasfitters. CO poisoning can occur in any home or building with poorly maintained open flued gas appliances. Sadly, since 2010, there have been three confirmed fatalities in Victoria caused by CO poisoning from OFGSHs - two young children, Chase and Tyler Robinson (2010) and Sonia Sofianopoulos (2017). In the same period, five serious, non-fatal suspected CO poisonings were linked to OFGSHs reported to ESV.

Fixing a negative pressure situation

Negative pressure situations can be fixed by ensuring ventilation openings in your home or building are clear (older homes can have flywire mesh behind the vents) and where necessary, installing additional ventilation. Your gasfitter should be able to carry out the work required. Visit the ESV website to watch a short animation explaining the effects of negative pressure - Understanding and testing for a negative pressure environment.

What to do if you keep using a Type A open flued gas appliance

While your Type A gas appliance has been left operating, you are strongly advised to stop using any Type A open flued gas appliance until the negative pressure situation has been fixed.

If you decide to continue to use the appliance, you should either:

- leave a window open in the rooms where your extraction fans are located; or
- switch off all your extraction fans while the appliance is operating.

Using alternative heating sources

If you are going to use an alternative heating source, make sure it is designed to be used indoors. Gas appliances designed for outdoor use or for another purpose (like a gas oven or gas hotplate), should never be used for heating. You should only ever use gas appliances indoors if they are designed for indoor use, and only in the way they are intended to be used.

Further information

For further information on what you need to do, contact the Building and Plumbing Commission on 1300 067 088 during business hours.