



Home Tips®



• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 1003 STAR COURT, NORCROSS, GEORGIA 30093, (770) 925-8518 • FEBRUARY 1998 •

Q & A

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning On The Rise?

We heard carbon monoxide poisonings are on the rise in homes. What is causing this and what can be done about it?

Today's houses are more air tight due to energy conserving measures. Consequently there is less fresh air coming into a home and not as many pathways for stale or polluted air to leave it. When furnaces and boilers are starved of the oxygen needed to burn fuels completely, carbon monoxide is produced. Many newer houses are so airtight that powered exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathroom can overcome the draft in the furnace chimney and literally pull the toxic gases into the living space.

The new high-efficiency gas and oil furnaces, when hooked up to existing flues, often do not perform at an optimum level. The differences in performance create conditions that allow combustion byproducts to more easily enter home living spaces.

The above conditions join a number of older, on-going problems including damaged or deteriorating flue liners, soot build-up, debris clogging the passageway, and animal or bird nests obstructing chimney flues.

PREVENTING PROBLEMS

In the United States, numerous agencies and organizations now recognize the importance of annual heating system inspection and maintenance in preventing carbon monoxide poisoning. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Fire Protection Association, the American Lung Association - are some of the organizations that now encourage the regular maintenance of home heating systems and their chimneys in order to keep "the silent killer" at bay.

A well tuned furnace or boiler, connected to a venting system or flue that is correctly sized, structurally sound, clean and free of blockages, will operate efficiently and produce a warm and comfortable home. Carbon monoxide detectors are now readily available and no home should be without at least two, one near the furnace and one near the sleeping area of the home. Detectors are NOT a substitute for routine maintenance, but can be a lifesaver should problems occur.

Considering the risks involved when gas or oil systems are neglected, and the benefits that accrue when they are properly

maintained, we suggest you have your furnace serviced yearly by a qualified technician and your chimneys checked annually by a C.S.I.A. Certified Chimney Sweep and cleaned or repaired as needed.

SOURCE: Chimney Safety Institute of America
<http://www.csia.org/home/cohazard.htm>

Septic System Additives & Chemicals?

Should you add chemicals, nutrients, cleaners, degloggers to septic systems?

Chemicals and other additives promoted to keep a septic system "healthy" or "free-flowing" or "nourished" are generally not required nor recommended by any known expert sources. The following references support this statement:

- (1) Penn State College of Agriculture - Cooperative Extension: Agricultural Fact Sheet #SW-161 "Septic Tank Pumping," by Paul D. Robillard and Kelli S. Martin - last line of second paragraph "Biological and chemical additives are not needed to aid or accelerate decomposition."
- (2) Agricultural Fact Sheet #SW-161 "Preventing Septic System Failures," by Paul D. Robillard and Kelli S. Martin - page 2, Maintenance Failures, paragraph two, "Chemical or biological additives are not a substitute for pumping."
- (3) "Soil Science Facts, Septic Tank Systems," Michael T. Hoover, Dept. of Soil Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, SS 86-4, "Are Septic-Tank Cleaners Necessary?" "No. These products include biologically based materials (bacteria, enzymes, and yeast), inorganic chemicals (acids and bases), or organic chemicals (including solvents). They do not reduce the need for regular pumping of the septic tank. Some of these products contain organic chemicals and may even damage the drainfield or contaminate the groundwater and nearby wells."
- (4) Florida ASHI Seminar, Kissimmee FL, 10/10/93, "Septic Tank News & Views," cites Florida building code 10D-6.050 Maintenance, paragraph (4) "Organic chemical solvents shall not be advertised, sold, or used in the state for the purpose of degreasing or deglogging onsite sewage disposal systems. (4)(a) All organic chemical solvents known to have been used as degloggers or degreasers of onsite sewage disposal systems or those which have a likelihood of being used in such a manner shall be labeled on the front of each product container with the following language: 'Florida Statute 381.0065 (13) prohibits the advertisement, sale or use of organic chemical

solvents for the purpose of degreasing or declogging onsite sewage systems in the state.' ... "

(5) "Septic Tank Maintenance," K. Mancl and J.A. Moore, Oregon State University Extension Service, Extension Circular 1343/January 1990. "Biological and chemical additives are not needed to aid or accelerate settling or decomposition."

(6) The view that chemical and other additives are not necessary, and in some jurisdictions are illegal, was held by information we collected from every U.S. state as well as Canadian sources.

Source: Dan Friedman, American Home Service Co.

Lennox Finding Problems In Some Pulse Furnaces.

Lennox Industries Inc., the maker of Lennox Pulse furnaces, announced it has set up a free program to inspect Lennox furnaces installed from 1982 to 1989 to check for carbon monoxide leaks.

According to Bob Schjerven, president and chief operating officer for Lennox, dealers have recently reported increased instances of corrosion in some Pulse furnace heat exchangers in units installed before 1990. As part of the inspection program, Lennox will provide a free AIM Safety carbon monoxide detector.

The company urges owners of Lennox Pulse furnaces installed between 1982 and 1989 to schedule a furnace and safety check with an independent Lennox dealer by calling 800-537-4341.

The Inspection is free, but if the furnace has to be cleaned in order to be inspected, the customer could be charged for the cleaning.

To identify a Pulse furnace, look for its name on the door. If the unit is a Pulse 21 furnace, it was manufactured after 1990 and is not part of the inspection program.

For those with Lennox furnaces without the Pulse 21 name, the next step is to remove the front door and look for the name tag. These tags are usually placed on the inside cabinet wall on the left side of the furnace. Locate the model number on the tag (either G14 or GSR14 followed by a series of numbers and letters) and the serial number on a tag below the name tag. Homeowners who call the 800 number with the information will be told if their furnace is eligible for this inspection program. The inspection program runs through July 1, 1999. If the warranted heat exchanger needs replacing, Lennox will provide a new heat exchanger at no cost to the owner. Labor costs for replacement parts are not part of the Pulse furnace warranty.

SOURCE: ASHI Reporter, September 1997 p23

If you have a question, change of address, comment, home tip or would like to send *Home Tips* to your clients, send your letter to *Home Tips*, Christian Building Inspectors, Inc., 1003 Star Court, Norcross, Georgia 30093. You can E-Mail your questions to us at rodharrison@mindspring.com/. We reserve the right to edit questions for length.

Quote Of The Month

"IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO BE WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE BECOME"

- GEORGE ELIOT

A Tip Of The Hat To:

Diana Lipton
Re/Max of Buckhead
Atlanta, Georgia



Thank You

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