

Boiler Safety: Nothing To Sniff At

When there is a drop in temperatures across the UK in August/September, then it is traditionally time to kick-start your boiler from out of its dusty hibernation. However, you need to check it out for carbon monoxide. This odourless silent killer is definitely nothing to sniff at! So, follow these life-saving guidelines for complete boiler safety and protect you and your housemates...

Basic Test

Check the colour of the boiler's flame in your rented property;

Bright blue: Normal

Yellowy orange: Possible carbon monoxide presence.

Yearly checks

You need to make sure that your boiler has received a yearly service – so ask your landlord. If it needs to be checked, make sure these are only done by a registered technician.

The technician

Make sure your technician is registered with the following organisations depending on your type of boilers;

Gas Safe Register (Gas Safe Register is the official body for gas safety in United Kingdom, Isle of Man and Guernsey) for gas boilers.

Oftec (the Oil Firing Technical Association for the Petroleum Industry) for Oil heating systems.

Health evidence of carbon monoxide

In adults;

- Headache
- Nausea
- Abdominal pain
- Dizziness
- Sore throat
- Dry cough

But, unlike a flu infection – which has similar symptoms, carbon monoxide poisoning doesn't cause a high temperature.

Severe poisoning;

- Irregular heart rate
- Hyperventilation
- Confusion

- Drowsiness
- Difficulty breathing
- Seizures
- Loss of consciousness may also occur.

Some symptoms can occur a few days or even months after exposure to carbon monoxide. These may include confusion, loss of memory and problems with coordination.

Environment awareness

You can also prevent serious consequences by learning to spot the warning signs. Carbon monoxide poisoning may be a possibility if:

- Other people in your rented accommodation suffer similar symptoms
- Symptoms tend to disappear when you go away (for example, when you go back home)
- Symptoms tend to be seasonal (for example, headaches during the winter when indoor heating is used more often)

How is it prevented?

Make sure you landlord has carried out the following;

- Have chimneys and flues checked regularly
- Make sure gas appliances and heating systems are inspected every year

You can prevent any problems by;

- Fitting a carbon monoxide alarm - available from DIY stores to detect problems
- Never running cars, motorbikes or lawnmowers in a closed garage

This safety guide has been provided by [FireAngel](#).

Resources

Visit <http://www.nace.org.uk> for the National Association Chimney Engineers for expert chimney advice.

Visit <http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk> and get expert technical advice, help and information on gas boilers from the Gas Safe Register.

Visit <http://www.oftec.org/index.htm> for expert advice on oil heating systems from Oftec.