

II.8.6

Stay Safe – Gas in Caravan Holiday Homes and Residential Park Homes

BH&HPA has produced a joint leaflet with the NCC which explains the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning and the steps necessary to ensure safety including the need for annual checks by a properly qualified engineer and the dangers of blocking off ventilation. It also describes the danger signs of a malfunctioning appliance, encourages the fitting of an audible detector and outlines what to do if the alarm goes off.

It is recommended that these messages are communicated to all caravan holiday home and park home owners as part of a park's health and safety management. Ideally, records should be maintained as to the provision of this advice to customers in order to demonstrate, if ever this is necessary, the steps taken by the park business.

The text of the leaflet is provided overleaf and copies can be downloaded from the members' website or obtained from BH&HPA central office.

Stay Safe Gas in caravan holiday homes and residential park homes

What is Carbon Monoxide poisoning?

Carbon Monoxide is poisonous and results from the incomplete combustion of gas and fuels.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning happens when you breathe Carbon Monoxide, even at very low levels. The symptoms are like having flu, but can lead to death. Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse and loss of consciousness. The young and the old are at particular risk.

You will not know if you are being exposed to Carbon Monoxide as it is colourless, odourless and tasteless.

The symptoms are often overlooked and the only sure means of diagnosis is a blood test.

Staying safe

If your caravan holiday home or park home displays the National Caravan Council badge of approval (see below), you have the reassurance that it has been designed with safety in mind.



However, it is essential that you take simple steps to ensure both your own and others' safety:

- Get all your gas appliances regularly serviced and safety checked every year.
- Don't block the ventilation.
- Know the danger signs to look out for.
- Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix or service your appliances.
- Fit an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm (EN50291).

Get your gas appliances checked annually

All gas appliances should be serviced annually to keep them working safely and efficiently. This will reduce the chance of exposure to Carbon Monoxide and also reduce running costs.

The law requires an annual check to be done if you let out accommodation; for example, if holidaymakers stay in your caravan holiday home.

Never Do-It-Yourself with gas

Do not let unqualified people work on gas appliances; always use a Gas Safe registered engineer, qualified either in natural gas and/or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

- Check the engineer is qualified for the work you need doing - you can find this information on the back of their ID card.
- Make sure that they have the appropriate registration for the gas used in your appliances.

■ Ask for the gas safety record for the work carried out

Your park manager may be able to recommend a suitable Gas Safe registered engineer. Alternatively to find a Gas Safe registered engineer visit www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk or call 0800 408 5500.

Don't block the ventilation

Gas-burning appliances need a constant supply of air in order for complete combustion to occur and to keep you safe.

Suitable ventilation is designed into caravan holiday homes and park homes to ensure your safety. If you block that ventilation, it could lead to Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

Stay safe: never block the ventilation!

Know what to look out for

You cannot see, taste or smell Carbon Monoxide, but you can look out for signs.

Your gas appliance should burn with a crisp blue flame. If it burns with lazy yellow or orange flames, or you notice sooting or staining, you could be at risk.

If you spot the danger signs, get it checked out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

Fit an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm

Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms will provide a further safeguard.

There should be two: one in the living area and one in the master bedroom.

Test them at least once a month and never remove the batteries.

If not already fitted, buy alarms that comply with BS EN 50291:2001 and follow the fitting instructions carefully.

Check and follow the maintenance requirements; Carbon Monoxide alarms usually need replacing about every five years.

There is no substitute for properly functioning **audible** alarms. Do not be tempted to fit the cheaper 'black spot' detectors as they won't sound an alarm and alert you to potential danger.

If the alarm goes off

- Make sure everyone leaves the home.
- Turn off the gas at the meter or cylinder valve.
- Get medical attention for anyone feeling unwell.
- Immediately call the gas emergency number for your area.
- Tell the park manager.
- Get the gas appliances checked.
- Do not re-enter until you have been told it is safe to do so.