

Indoor gas poisoning warning

Tasmanians may put themselves or their families at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning in their homes, shacks, sheds, caravans and boats by using fuel-burning heating or cooking appliances inside, or in poorly ventilated areas.

You cannot see, taste or smell carbon monoxide, but it can kill within a few minutes.

Never use outdoor barbecues, charcoal grills, portable gas, heat-bead stoves, or generators indoors. Don't use them in other enclosed spaces like caravans or boat cabins. Any kind of burning fuel makes dangerous gases including carbon monoxide.

How common is the problem?

There are several hospital presentations due to carbon monoxide poisoning every year in Tasmania, with occasional deaths.

What are the symptoms?

Carbon monoxide poisoning causes headaches, nausea, dizziness, fainting, shortness of breath and confusion.

Symptoms often affect more than one person.

- If you suspect gas poisoning immediately get everyone out of the building, caravan or boat. Stay out, call Triple Zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.

Stay safe with heating

- Never use a fuel burning or gas heater inside a house or other enclosed space, unless it has a flue or chimney.
- Never sleep in a room with a gas heater that does not have a flue or chimney.

- The sale of LPG cabinet heaters is banned in Australia. They do not meet Australian Safety Standards. Do not use them.
- Only use heaters made for indoor use inside your home. Read and follow the instructions.
- Make sure your heater is put in and maintained properly. Use someone with the right qualifications.
- Get your heater serviced once each year.
- Do not try to heat your home with a kitchen stove or oven, portable gas stove, heat bead stove or charcoal grill.

Stay safe when cooking

- Read and follow the instructions for your stove and oven.
- Inside your home, only use kitchen stoves and ovens for cooking.
- Do not use an outdoor barbecue (BBQ), portable gas stove, camping stove, charcoal grill or heat-bead stove inside.
- Use a range hood when cooking to ventilate the gases away. This is especially important for gas cook tops.
- Do not use wood, coal or heat beads to roast coffee or smoke food inside. Do this outside only.
- You can roast coffee safely inside your home using a pan on the kitchen stove.
- Use a range hood and never leave food cooking on your stove unattended.

Stay safe on boats

Exhaust gases from engines, generators and stoves using any kind of fuel can build up poisonous gases in small spaces like cabins and engine bays.

Gases can also build up on low surfaces like the water beside exhaust ports and under duck boards at the stern of powerboats.

Exhaust fumes can be drawn back into the boat from these areas.

- Keep cabins and engine bays well ventilated.
- Ensure rain and weather covers do not block the free flow of air around the boat and keep forward-facing hatches open so fresh air can circulate.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms in cabins and get them serviced regularly.
- Check the burners on your gas appliances.
- Have a qualified gas fitter check your gas installation and appliances every year and a qualified marine mechanic check your engines every year.

- Check the detailed advice provided by Marine and Safety Tasmania at www.mast.tas.gov.au/recreational/handling-operation/carbon-monoxide/

Other safety tips

- Do not leave a car, truck or petrol engine running in a garage even if you leave the garage door open.
- Do not burn rubbish or plastic inside.
- Do not use generators inside or in confined spaces like garages
- Consider installing carbon monoxide alarms and have them serviced regularly
- Always keep gas bottles outside your home.

For more information or help

In a medical emergency call 000 and ask for an ambulance

Call the Fire Service on 1800 000 699 if you have fire safety concerns.

Call the Public Health Hotline – Tasmania 1800 671 738 for more information.