



Media Release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service

Silent killer causes home safety warning

Thursday, 3 June 2021

South Australians are being warned about the dangers of Carbon Monoxide poisoning with 15 cases requiring hospital admission since 1 July 2020 (YTD April).

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Angelo Mastripolito said with winter just beginning, this number has the potential to rise due to the increased use of gas appliances, such as unflued gas heaters.

“Increasingly, people are turning their backyard area into an inviting enclosed space, with the installation of blinds, fit for cooking and entertaining all year round. This means that typical outdoor equipment and appliances, such as gas fuelled barbeques, patio outdoor heaters or ethanol fuelled heaters are being used in an indoor environment,” Angelo Mastripolito said.

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Angelo Mastripolito said when these types of equipment become faulty or are operated in poorly ventilated areas, products of combustion can build up and be inhaled by residents without them even realising.

SA Health’s Director, Health Protection, Michaela Hobby explained that carbon monoxide is known as the ‘silent killer’ due to it having no smell, taste, or colour, meaning it is extremely difficult to detect.

“Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning include persistent tiredness, shortness of breath, headaches, nausea, vomiting and loss of consciousness.”

“Those most vulnerable to Carbon Monoxide poisoning are babies and young children, pregnant women, the elderly and immobile and those with respiratory problems.

“Anyone experiencing symptoms should seek medical attention immediately by calling triple zero,” SA Health’s Director, Health Protection, Michaela Hobby said.

Rob Faunt, Office of the Technical Regulator said people should be aware of Carbon Monoxide dangers and how to ensure their safety when using gas appliances.

“People should have their gas appliances professionally installed in areas with adequate ventilation and serviced every two years by qualified tradespersons.

“It is also important that all gas appliances are maintained and used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and that heaters or appliances marked as ‘outdoor use only’ are not used indoors,” Rob Faunt, Office of the Technical Regulator said.

ED Presentations with Carbon Monoxide poisoning by Financial year

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	YTD April 2020/21
Presentations	28	29	15	31	24	21	15

For more details people can visit <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/energy-and-environment/using-electricity-and-gas-safely/carbon-monoxide>.

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Members of the public should call the MFS Community Engagement Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours for further information. Country callers 1300 737 637.

