



**Carbon**

**Monoxide**

**Safety**

*For your protection,  
please read the  
contents of this leaflet  
and keep it handy for  
future reference*



**SOLID FUEL  
ASSOCIATION**

## 1. Carbon Monoxide is a highly poisonous gas

Carbon Monoxide fumes have no colour, taste or smell and can be produced by appliances that use gas, wood, oil, coal or smokeless fuel. Carbon Monoxide can also be present in smoke from solid fuel, wood or oil appliances. Carbon Monoxide is potentially fatal, and even low-levels of the poison can cause lasting damage to your health.

## 2. You must have your solid fuel or wood burning appliance safety-checked annually by a registered competent person for solid fuel and wood appliances i.e. a HETAS Registered Engineer.

You increase the risk of your appliance producing Carbon Monoxide if it is badly installed or poorly maintained.

If you have a solid fuel appliance you should empty the ash can daily, clean the flue ways at the back of the boiler weekly and clean the throat plates at the top of the room heater monthly. Have your chimney swept at least once a year if burning smokeless fuel or at least twice a year if using wood or bituminous coal.

If you live in rented accommodation with gas appliances your landlord must provide you with proof that a CORGI registered installer has safety-checked the appliances within the last 12 months. A responsible landlord will provide the same for solid fuel and oil.

## 3. Fit an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm

Carbon Monoxide alarms need to meet European safety standards and must be audible. Fit them in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions. **Note: an alarm is no substitute for regular maintenance and chimney sweeping.**

We do not recommend the use of a 'Black Spot' detector – these are often inaccurate and will not alert you if you are overcome by Carbon Monoxide fumes or asleep.

If you are concerned about the threat of Carbon Monoxide poisoning whilst on holiday in the UK or abroad, you may wish to take a battery-operated Carbon Monoxide alarm with you.

#### **4. Recognising the early symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning will save your life**

The symptoms of Carbon Monoxide poisoning are similar to the 'flu'; nausea, dizziness, tiredness, headaches, stomach and chest pains. If you experience these symptoms but feel better when you are outside or away from the appliance, you could be suffering from Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

#### **5. Know how to spot the signs of Carbon Monoxide around your appliance**

Look out for Carbon Monoxide danger signs such as sooting or staining around the appliance and excessive condensation in the room.

Carbon Monoxide can also be present in smoke from solid fuel, wood or oil appliances.

If you are using a gas appliance that should have a crisp blue flame, such as a pilot light, look out for changes. If it turns to a lazy orange flame, the appliance may not be working correctly.

#### **6. Know what to do and who to call in an emergency**

If you suspect a Carbon Monoxide leak, stop using the appliance until it has been checked by a competent engineer. You should open windows to ventilate the area, leave the room to get some fresh air and seek medical advice.

If you receive medical attention, be sure to state that you suspect you could be suffering from Carbon Monoxide poisoning to ensure you receive appropriate treatment, and are offered a breath or blood test.

#### **7. It is dangerous to block ventilation**

Blocking ventilation or misusing your appliance can lead to Carbon Monoxide poisoning.

You should have your chimney swept at least once a year, preferably before each winter.

*You can find out more about carbon monoxide and safety for solid fuel and wood appliances on the Solid Fuel Association website [www.solidfuel.co.uk](http://www.solidfuel.co.uk) or telephone 0845 601 4406*

*For all fuels visit the Carbon Monoxide Consumer Awareness Alliance website accessed from the SFA website safety page.*

**Remember always buy your fuel  
from an Approved Coal Merchant  
look out for the logo**



**All the appliances in your home  
serve you more reliably and  
efficiently if they are installed  
and serviced correctly and your  
Solid Fuel appliance is no exception  
Always use a Hetas Registered Engineer**



**A Chimney Sweep should preferably be a member of  
a recognised association such as:-  
The National Association of Chimney Sweeps (NACS)  
The Guild of Master Sweeps (GMS) or  
The Association of Professional Independent  
Chimney Sweeps (APICS)**

**Contact the Solid Fuel Association  
for a list of members in your area  
for any of the above services  
Tel 0845 601 4406 or visit our website  
[www.solidfuel.co.uk](http://www.solidfuel.co.uk)**



**For information on services for other fuels  
Please contact:**

**Corgi  
Tel: 0870 401 2300**

**Oftec  
0845 658 5080**

***Further copies of this leaflet are available by  
Contacting the Solid Fuel Association***