

General Gas-Fired Equipment Maintenance Tips

Have your Gas Equipment Checked Regularly

HAVE A HEATING CONTRACTOR (registered with the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA)) perform a yearly maintenance check-up of your gas-fired equipment and venting system to ensure efficient, safe operation. Adjustments, cleaning of burners, replacement of parts, repairs and inspections of venting are jobs for licensed professionals who know the equipment and the codes that must be followed. Beware of service providers who offer free or low-price inspections. They may not be using licensed technicians to do safety inspections to code and may be inspecting your equipment to offer other types of services. When calling for or agreeing to an inspection, ensure that the service provider uses TSSA registered gas technicians to do an actual safety inspection and ask for the gas technicians provincial registration number.

NATURAL GAS FUEL BURNING EQUIPMENT NEEDS an unimpeded air supply in order to burn gas safely and efficiently. Some equipment has a pipe that brings outdoor air directly into the combustion chamber so that the equipment does not depend on household air. But some natural gas equipment does use household air.

OTHER HOUSEHOLD GAS-FIRED EQUIPMENT and systems also use household air and expel it outdoors. Kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans, power attic vents, a wood-burning fireplace, a central vacuum system, a clothes dryer: all reduce the amount of household air available for your natural gas equipment.

IN ADDITION, SEALING YOUR HOME to conserve energy will also reduce the infiltration of outside air through cracks and gaps. If you're weatherproofing your home or renovating, provision for adequate air and ventilation should be made at the same time to compensate for reduced infiltration.

Warning Signs

YOUR HOME MAY NEED MORE AIR and better ventilation if you notice the following:

- stale air and smells that linger

- backdrafts from a fireplace or furnace (air or exhaust is drawn back down the chimney or flue and into the house)
- lots of moisture and mould build-up
- a pilot light that keeps going out

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR HOME NEEDS MORE AIR, consult a TSSA registered heating contractor. Have an expert evaluate your situation and suggest appropriate solutions. Meanwhile, until you have a permanent solution, let in more air by slightly opening a window near your furnace or other natural gas appliances. If no window is nearby, then open a window elsewhere and leave the door to the room open so air can circulate.

How to use Natural Gas Fuel Burning Equipment Safely

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions in the owner's manual or use the care guide for maintenance and use of your equipment.
- Never try to repair or install natural gas appliances yourself, and never let a home handyman try to do the job for you. Repairs and installation are jobs for licensed professionals.
- Do not use natural gas equipment that has yellow flames. Natural gas-fired equipment should have a burner flame that is a clear blue or a flame that is mostly blue with a tiny tip of yellow. The only exception is a natural gas fireplace, which has been designed to have yellow flames for a pleasing appearance. In other equipment, a yellow flame signals a problem. Turn off the appliance and have a TSSA registered serviceperson check and adjust the equipment before using it again.
- Keep the area around your natural gas heating system, water heater and other gas-fired equipment clean and free of lint build-up, rags, old newspapers and other debris.
- Do not store boxes (or other items) on top of, or pressed against, your natural gas equipment.
- Never cover the temperature controls, air openings, or vents of your fuel-burning equipment.
- Insulate the first metre of hot water pipe that extends from the tank. Make sure any pipe wrap or insulation is at least 15 centimetres (6 inches) away from the draft hood or flue at the top of the tank.
- Do not turn up the temperature control on your natural gas water heater because doing so will increase the danger of scalds from hot tap water. If you need a higher water temperature setting, a tempering valve or anti-scald device should be installed in the water pipe system. (These devices can be purchased at major plumbing supply stores.)
- Keep the burners and oven of a natural gas range clean. Never line the oven completely with aluminum foil. Never use the range as a room heater.
- Never store aerosol cans, paints, solvents, household cleaners, pool chemicals or similar products near natural gas or any other fuel-burning appliances or equipment.
- Be cautious if your hobby area or work area contains products such as paint strippers, glues, rubber cement, varnishes, turpentine, cleaning fluid, and floor finishing products. They give off vapours which could be ignited by any flame source, including the burner or pilot light of natural gas-fired equipment. Vapours are invisible but are heavier than air

and can drift or be carried on air currents. These vapours can corrode metal vents and fuel-fired equipment combustion chambers after they mix with moisture in the products of combustion.

TURN OFF ALL NATURAL GAS FUEL BURNING EQUIPMENT WHEN YOU USE THESE PRODUCTS. For your own health, make sure your work area is well-ventilated with an exhaust fan and lots of incoming fresh air.