

Home Heating Safety

No matter what type of home heating unit you have, always follow the manufacturer's instructions for installing, operating, and maintaining your heating appliance. It's a good idea to get acquainted with the operation of your heating unit, and with a few precautionary steps, you can reduce the chances of an accident. Have your heater checked by a professional every year before cold weather arrives. If you're a seasonal customer, you should have your equipment checked before reactivation.

Gas equipment requires an adequate air supply to operate properly. Without proper ventilation, your equipment may produce carbon monoxide (CO), a poisonous gas. For this reason, when a heater is located in a tightly sealed home, a window or door should be opened slightly while you are using it.

If you ever smell fumes, your eyes sting, or you become dizzy or nauseated while your heater is on, turn it off immediately, open doors and windows and leave the house. Have it checked by a qualified service professional or call Fort Pierce Utilities Authority.

On a vented heater:

- ❖ Make sure the venting system is open, and that it draws fumes out of the house -- a blocked vent can cause your system to exhaust CO into your living space. Vents should have caps on them to prevent blockages.
- ❖ Turn off the heater if the vent is not operating properly.
- ❖ Do not operate a gas heater in a completely "tight" room. The heater needs fresh air to operate safely and efficiently. "Crack" a window, if needed. If your heating system is located in a closet, be sure the louvers or grills in the door are not blocked.
- ❖ Do not operate heating equipment if you are unsure of its condition or instructions are unavailable. If you have an older unvented gas-fired space heater that is not equipped with today's safety guards, consider replacing it.
- ❖ Your heating equipment may need servicing if you have trouble keeping the pilot light on or if the control valve is hard to operate. Do not force or tamper with the control.

Caution should be taken regarding any gas appliance and venting systems. Due to recent storms, many vents, caps, and vent piping have been broken or blown off roofs. Please make certain these pipes and caps have been repaired or replaced. Call Fort Pierce Utilities Authority, or a qualified professional, to arrange for an inspection and servicing of your natural gas heating unit.