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For more energy information, go to <http://energy.tennessee.edu>.

Gas Appliances

Many Tennessee homes have furnaces, water heaters, clothes dryers and cook ranges/ovens that use propane or natural gas as the fuel. While these appliances are safe, these precautionary steps must be taken by the consumer to assure they remain that way throughout their life:

- Operate appliance(s) as they were designed and intended for (DON'T ALTER EQUIPMENT).
- Keep appliance(s) clean.
- Other than heating equipment, do not use gas appliances as a source of home heating.
- Never use unvented gas and kerosene heaters.
- Routinely inspect and provide preventive maintenance.

Sounds easy doesn't it?

It is; however, these simple items are generally overlooked by the consumer and can create potentially dangerous situations:

- Incomplete gas combustion, which also wastes energy.
- Spillage of combustion gas by-products into the home: carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and respirable particles.
- Backdrafting harmful exhaust gases down the chimney and into the home.
- A trained technician can check these items for safety.

When using combustion appliances follow these guidelines:

- Properly operate appliance(s).
- Never alter a combustion appliance, its exhaust flue or gas piping from original installation.
- If a combustion appliance and connections must be relocated or replaced, seek the services of the gas fuel provider or a professional technician.
- Never block off fresh air intake vents.
- Never enclose a combustion appliance without assuring adequate combustion air is available to the appliance.
- Never use a gas range or oven as a heater.
- When a naturally vented gas appliance (e.g., water heater or range) is operating do not run a powered exhaust (e.g., counter top down-draft exhaust fan) fan in the same room – this may result in exhaust gas backdrafting.

Routinely inspect and provide preventive maintenance

Inspect gas appliances for:

- Blocked or clogged chimney opening.
- Blocked off crawl space or mobile home opening where fresh air is supplied for the gas appliance.
- Leaks and obstructions in furnace supply and return duct work.
- Cracked or separating exhaust flues.
- Corroded or disconnected vent pipe.
- Dirty filters.
- Pilot light failures.

