

MEDIA RELEASE

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FAMILY POISONED BY CARBON MONOXIDE SPARKS WARNING ABOUT USE OF CAMPING AND OUTDOOR GAS APPLIANCES IN ENCLOSED SPACES

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is warning Victorians never to use gas camping or LPG heaters in enclosed spaces after a family of three suffered carbon monoxide poisoning while camping at a caravan park at Burton's Bridge near Walhalla.

The family was using a canister heater in their tent overnight when they were overcome by carbon monoxide (CO). Fellow campers raised the alarm when a baby was heard crying inside the tent. Three people were found unconscious and taken to hospital where they are expected to make a full recovery.

This latest incident comes a week after the death of an Ararat man who was found in his home with a camping heater attached to an LPG bottle. Police are awaiting a toxicology report to determine if the man died from CO poisoning.

Victoria's Director of Energy Safety, Paul Fearon, said these two incidents were reminders of why gas appliances designed for outdoor use, including camping and patio heaters, canister cookers and barbecues, should never be used inside the home or in enclosed spaces.

"Carbon monoxide is a silent killer," Mr Fearon said. "You can't see it, you can't smell it and you can't taste it.

"The golden rule is if an appliance is attached to a portable gas bottle, don't bring it inside – and that includes tents. Outdoor gas appliances are not designed to be used in enclosed spaces. Without proper ventilation, CO can build up and quickly reach fatal levels."

Mr Fearon said an average of one Victorian died every year from CO poisoning, but it was also responsible for hundreds of people suffering debilitating, long-term health issues.

The symptoms of CO poisoning can include headaches, fatigue and nausea.

Mr Fearon said CO poisoning was most commonly caused by faulty gas heaters and all Victorians were urged to get their gas heaters checked by a qualified gasfitter at least once every two years.

"Energy Safe Victoria recommends that all gas heaters – including ducted heaters, room heaters and decorative log fires – are serviced once every two years by a registered or licensed gasfitter to ensure both the heater and flue are working properly."

"Don't let your family fall victim to this silent killer."

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