

Boilers need annual testing and inspections

A new rule regarding heating systems in Ontario means all natural draft gas and propane-fired boilers in homes will require annual inspection and testing. The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) is concerned that some of these boilers equipped with a draft hood are not properly installed, operated or maintained. This could result in a carbon monoxide (CO) safety hazard in the home that may cause personal injury or death. Most gas and propane fired boilers in the province have these draft hoods – the open caps in the vent piping immediately above the boiler.

Since the fall, TSSA legally requires that all heating contractors perform a CO safety check on the boiler and take action when an unsafe condition is identified. This check will be required when a technician enters a home with this type of boiler regardless of whether the homeowner/user has requested service on that boiler. The gas technician is also required to visually examine the boiler and take action if there are signs of poor operation.

To help REALTORS® understand the implications for their clients, Alan Carson, Vice President, Carson Dunlop provides answers to some of the most common questions about the new boiler rule.

Q: What does the inspection cost?

A: The inspection and test are not expensive, very often about \$100. Heating contractors are obliged to do this inspection and testing, even if not asked to do so by the homeowner. There should ideally be a series of tags on the boiler, indicating that the inspection and test has been performed every year.

Q: What does the test include?

A: The test involves boring a hole in the side of the metal flue, measuring the carbon monoxide (CO) levels and marking them down. If they exceed the acceptable limit, the boiler is red tagged (shut down) because it is dangerous. Failed tests are often the result of an obstructed venting system or a dirty heat exchanger.

Q: What if the boiler fails the test?

A: This means the boiler is not safe, and repairs will be required. In a worst-case scenario, the boiler would have to be replaced.

Q: What if I don't see any tags on the boiler?

A: If the boiler has not been previously tested, there is no need for alarm. The new homeowners should simply be aware that this test and inspection should be anticipated as part of their regular annual servicing of the heating system. Clearly, the chance of having a failed test is reduced if you see a tag indicating the last test was acceptable.

The following link

<http://www.tssa.org/CorpLibrary/ArticleFile.asp?Instance=136&ID=F6216D4A955D4AB09E954ACE4476231D>

will take you to the TSSA Web site and a document that spells out the requirements including a note to homeowners explaining the situation.