



PRESS RELEASE

TOP SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER

London, 19 October 2010 – With the cold winter nights upon us, here are a list of top tips to help keep you and your family safe during the coming months.

Love Your Boiler

By servicing your boiler on a yearly basis you will not only reduce the likelihood of a breakdown, but may actually increase the working life of your boiler by up to five years.

A pre-winter service carried out by a Gas Safe Register registered engineer may also help you reduce those dreaded January bills as it will ensure that your boiler is using energy efficiently.

If the worst happens and your boiler breaks down during the festive period, there are a couple of quick checks you can do before you incur the cost of an engineer call out charge. Central heating systems often switch

off for reasons other than there being a problem with the system itself. For example, there may not be enough water in the system or the fuse may have blown.

These are the first two things that an engineer will check when they arrive at your property and are often found to be the problem. Both are simple things to fix, so try checking your water gauge and topping up the system or replacing the fuse in the first instance.

If your boiler is still not working, you should not attempt to repair the boiler in any way yourself and should call out a gas engineer.

Lighting Fires

You can't see it or smell it but some 50* people die every year due to carbon monoxide poisoning and many more are made ill by exposure to it.

Statistics show that 1 in 5 households with a chimney in use have not had it swept in the last year and 8% have never had it swept at all.*

A check of all your gas appliances and flues, including a simple carbon monoxide check, will put your mind at rest that everything is in safe working order.

Living rooms with solid fuel heaters should be ventilated as hazardous situations can arise when windows and doors have been draught-proofed and the permanent ventilation is blocked by the homeowner.

When keeping out draughts be careful that you're not blocking in deadly CO fumes by shutting off the ventilation point, it's there for a reason!

Lights and Electricity

Electric heaters and kitchen appliances are in constant use during the winter and should also be checked to ensure they meet safety standards by a registered electrician. If a piece of electrical equipment cuts out continually, gives off a strange smell or if the plug feels warm, switch off immediately and get it checked!

- Never overload power points. If there are not enough sockets, consider alterations to have more

installed, as this is a much safer option than extension leads

- For appliances that use a lot of power such as heaters, hair dryers and kettles, use only one plug per socket
- Never double up your Christmas tree lights with the plug of another appliance as this could result in overheating, electric shocks, short circuiting and potentially cause a fire

Candles & Flames

Candle safety is all about common sense, but during the festive season being sensible can be far from our minds.

- Don't surround candles by foliage or decorations
- Always use a stable holder and don't stick a candle to a saucer with hot wax before going to bed
- Don't place candles on carpets or other flammable surfaces such as tablecloths
- Keep lit candles away from; pets, children, hair and clothes
- Never leave candles unattended or burning while you are out of the room and never forget to extinguish them

Bed Time checks

By carrying out the following checks before you go to bed, you can greatly reduce the chance of a fire starting while you are asleep and enjoying sweet dreams.

- Make sure all the burners or rings on your cooker are turned off
- Check that all the heaters are off and place guards in front of open fires
- Switch off all unused electrical appliances at the socket
- Close all internal doors, particularly in unoccupied rooms such as the kitchen, front room and dining room

**Statistics provided by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)*

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Editor's Notes

Founded in 1996, gas-*elec* carries out impartial safety inspections and light remedial works. Its unique inspection service provides the residential lettings market and homebuyers and sellers with multiple inspections of the gas and electrics in one visit. gas-*elec* has recently launched a number of new energy-saving products and services. These include the g-save Economiser, which reduces fuel bills by up to 31% and a consumer comparison website (*ge-switch*) that offers users the widest range of energy suppliers in order to compare their gas and electricity prices. gas-*elec* has over 130 franchisees operating from 18 regional offices, who this year will carry out more than 120,000 safety inspections in domestic properties throughout the UK. For more information visit www.gas-elec.co.uk.

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