

As winter approaches, if you haven't already done so, it is advisable that you have your gas central heating boiler checked for safety.

This is important as an inefficient gas boiler can result in carbon monoxide being given out. This is a colourless, odourless gas that can make you feel ill and even cause death.

Signs that indicate incomplete combustion include

- Yellow or orange rather than a blue flame (apart from fuel effect fires or flueless appliances which display this colour flame)
- Soot or yellow/brown staining around or on appliances
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out
- increased condensation inside windows.

The symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning may be mistaken for a cold or flu so you can be unaware that you are affected until it is too late.

Ensure that the central heating engineer that checks your boiler is Gas Safe registered. This is the new equivalent of the old Corgi registration.

We also advise that in addition you purchase a carbon monoxide detector/alarm.

This is a battery operated alarm which gives an audible warning when carbon monoxide is detected in the air. They cost between £10 and £25. Look for European Standard EN50291.

Both these types are readily available in local supermarkets, hardware stores and DIY shops.



Age UK produces a useful booklet entitled *Winter Wrapped up* with lots of information about keeping warm and remaining healthy during the winter months. It also contains a useful room thermometer. Please call us on 01375 389872 if you would like a copy.

All energy suppliers must have a **Priority Services Register** for people who are of pensionable age, have a disability, hearing or sight loss or have a long-term illness. It qualifies you for a range of services and support.

These may include

- password schemes, for doorstep security
- more regular meter readings
- repositioning meters to an accessible place.

There are additional eligibility criteria for some of them. Call your utility company for more information.

Age Concern Thurrock is a registered charity no 1000274

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