

Petroleum and Gas Inspectorate

Safety Alert No. 40
25 June 2009

All portable gas refrigerator users

ATTENTION: Caravan and campervan retail equipment suppliers, associations and the public.

What happened?

A male person died inside his Hi-Ace vehicle which was set up as a 'campervan'. An outdoor gas appliance (portable refrigerator) was found still operating inside the campervan.

The cause of death was identified as carbon monoxide poisoning.

This is the second of this type of incident in Queensland in the last two years.

Safety issues identified

- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless gas undetectable by humans and can result in fatal consequences.
- Portable gas appliances should not be operated in enclosed vehicles or poorly ventilated areas (small sheds, tents, etc).
- These types of gas appliances are specifically approved for outdoor use only.
- The lack of ventilation leads to an accumulation of dangerous concentration levels of carbon monoxide gas produced by the gas burning process.
- Portable refrigerators and all outdoor gas appliances come with appropriate safety warning signs.
- The Petroleum and Gas Inspectorate instructed importers and suppliers of these types of refrigerators that from 1 January 2008 they must fit larger warning labels on gas-operated refrigerators.
- Note: These appliances can only be safely used inside when operated on electricity (12 or 240 volts), if that option is available.



Location of refrigerator inside the unventilated campervan - note the gas cylinder beside the appliance.

Recommendations

- Users of these products should read the warning labels and follow the operational instructions for the product.
- These outdoor gas appliances must not be used indoors or in enclosed spaces.
- This warning applies to all other gas appliances specifically designed to be used outdoors such as barbeques and/or patio heaters.

For further information, please contact:

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