

Regularly maintain your natural gas appliances

To avoid costly repairs and safety hazards



Having your natural gas appliances regularly inspected and maintained by a Technical Safety BC licensed natural gas contractor helps ensure your safety and keeps them running at their best.

Appliance safety checklist

- Keep the owners' manuals that come with your appliances—they are the best source of information on maintaining and operating your natural gas appliances.
- Always keep furnace fan compartment doors and/or the filter access panel in place.
- Keep areas around natural gas appliances and vent pipes clear of combustible materials like laundry, paper, paints, solvents and propane cylinders.
- Don't store lawnmowers, motorcycles and other gasoline-powered equipment or vehicles indoors or near natural gas appliances.
- Make sure natural gas appliances have adequate air supply. Don't block the vent pipe bringing in outside air and check with a licensed gas contractor before enclosing appliances.
- Know where the shut-off valve for each appliance is and how to use it—the natural gas is "off" when the valve handle is at a right angle to the gas pipe.
- Inspect the gas piping that extends beyond the meter and into your home for leaks or signs of corrosion, such as rust, and have it repaired if necessary. A licensed gas contractor can locate, inspect and repair your gas piping, often at the same time as your maintenance service.

Tip: between maintenance visits, check your furnace filter about every three to six months, more if there are smokers and/or pets in the home. Replace it if necessary with a tight-fitting pleated style filter.

Signs your appliances need service

- pilot light outages (not all furnaces have standing pilot lights—check your manual)
- delayed ignition (mid- and high-efficiency furnaces have an intentional delay—check your manual)
- indications that the flame has “rolled-out” of the furnace, such as scorch marks by the door or other opening
- a yellow or wavering flame
- excessive soot or corrosion on the appliance or on the vent, such as white, brown or black streaks
- too much or too little heat
- the rotten egg or sulphur smell of the odourant in natural gas (which may indicate a leak) or a sharp odour that causes eyes to sting

Find a licensed gas contractor

We've made it easy to find a Technical Safety BC licensed natural gas contractor. Check out our Trade Ally Network directory at fortisbc.com/gascontractor. You can search by location or appliance type.

Be aware of carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, and toxic gas that is produced when fuels such as natural gas, propane, wood, tobacco and gasoline are burned incompletely. This can happen if there's a lack of fresh air, or if dirt and debris collect in the burner.

Symptoms of the presence of CO poisoning may include chronic headaches, nausea and flu-like symptoms, dizziness, drowsiness, confusion and loss of coordination.

Prevent CO concerns

One of the best ways to prevent CO in your home is to have your natural gas appliances installed and regularly maintained by a licensed natural gas contractor.

You can also do your part to prevent CO by regularly checking that external vents from your natural gas appliances are clear of leaves or debris to ensure fresh air flow, and by never operating an appliance designed for outdoor use, such as a barbecue, in an enclosed space.

CO alarms

Installing CO alarms can offer extra peace of mind, but they're not a substitute for regular appliance inspection and maintenance.

When shopping, look for one with Canadian Standards Association (CSA) approval. You should see CSA standard number 6.19-01 and the blue flame logo printed on the package.

Learn more

Call us at **1-888-224-2710** or visit fortisbc.com/safeappliances.

Smell gas?

Natural gas is used safely in B.C. every day. But if you smell the odour of rotten eggs or sulphur, follow these three simple steps:

- Stop what you're doing.
- Go outside.
- Call **911** or FortisBC's 24-hour emergency line at **1-800-663-9911**.

Learn more at fortisbc.com/gasodour.