



News Release

December 15, 2003

**Be Safe This Holiday Season --
Prevent CO Exposure in Your Home!**

For Immediate Release (Toronto, ON) --- The Technical Standards & Safety Authority (TSSA) reports that over the past five years, poorly maintained heating systems and improperly used fuel-burning appliances have sent hundreds of people in Ontario to the hospital for the treatment of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Of these, more than 80 per cent could have been prevented through an annual inspection by a heating technician.

TSSA, Ontario's fuels safety watchdog, is reminding you to protect your family and friends from the dangers of CO in your home this holiday season by ensuring that your furnace, other fuel-burning appliances, vents and chimneys are in safe working order.

CO is a colourless, odourless, tasteless gas produced when fuels such as natural gas, wood, propane and kerosene are starved of air to burn completely. Sometimes adequate airflow can be affected by blockages in vents and chimneys as well as damaged parts inside heating systems. Symptoms of CO poisoning include nausea and vomiting, dizziness, burning eyes, difficulty breathing, confusion and loss of consciousness. In severe cases, it can result in brain damage, even death.

"It's essential for homeowners to have annual inspections by licensed technicians of vents, chimneys and heating equipment including furnaces, fireplaces, wood burning and kerosene stoves," says TSSA President and CEO Margaret Kelch. "This alone would prevent most CO incidents".

Ms. Kelch added: "It goes without saying that all homes must be equipped with CO alarms. TSSA is concerned, however, that too many homeowners rely solely on them. They are no substitute for thorough inspections and should be considered as a second line of defence in the same way as smoke detectors".

For more information on how to keep you and your family "CO" safe this holiday season, please visit TSSA's CO safety Web site at www.cosafety.com

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