



THE OTHER DEADLY DANGER OF A FLOOD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Toronto, ON, March 27, 2008). The Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) recently investigated a serious carbon monoxide poisoning in the Niagara Region where three family members fell unconscious, one member phoned 911 and all were taken to hospital for emergency treatment. While everyone thankfully recovered, it was an incident that could have been avoided – and one which could have as easily happened to you.

With the onset of spring and winter's welcomed thaw, a not-so welcome but common event occurs: flooding. Apart from destroying valuable family treasures, it can cause extensive and quite costly damage to appliances and even infrastructure. Under such circumstances, you logically call your insurer, gain an estimate on the damage and proceed with repairs.

In the Niagara Region case, TSSA's investigation determined one root cause of the incident: negative pressure. After getting hit with a flood, the family hired a company to dry out their basement and prevent the growth of mould (as is often the recommended practice of insurers) with large ventilating fans. Unfortunately the basement also had a fuel-fired furnace and the company was unaware of any danger. The fans created a depressurized environment — or *negative* pressure — causing deadly carbon monoxide to spill back into the home and send four family members to hyperbaric chambers at a nearby hospital.

One thing to remember that is critical to your safety? Fuel burning appliances *must be* vented to the outside. Negative pressure conditions can result in a back-draft of combustion appliances. *And negative pressure can kill.*

Carbon monoxide, otherwise known as the 'silent killer', is produced when fuels do not get enough air to burn completely. It is an odourless, tasteless, non-irritating poison that displaces oxygen in the body, causing the nervous system to completely shut down. Symptoms are similar to those of the flu and can include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, disorientation and/or confusion. It can knock you unconscious or worse – lead to death.

If unsure of *any* condition that may affect your fuel-fired appliance, consult a professional fuels-related technician. All technicians must be certified by TSSA. If uncertain as to whether your technician is certified or not, ask to see a certificate number or contact TSSA at 1-877-682-8772 for verification. On a final note, all houses should be equipped with carbon monoxide detectors. Consult your local fire department as per recommended safety conditions.

About TSSA

TSSA is an innovative, self-funded, non-government organization focused on delivering public safety services. It provides not-for-profit regulatory safety services in industry sectors such as fuels, amusement devices, elevating devices, ski lifts, boilers and pressure vessels, operating engineers,



Media Release

and upholstered and stuffed articles. The organization's vision is to be the world leader in public safety services.

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