



**SOUTH BAY
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CENTER**

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

November 2012 News and Events

Three Good Reasons to Prepare for Cooler Weather: Cost Savings, Energy Savings and Safety Issues

As temperatures cool down South Bay Environmental Services Center (SBESC) and Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) are advising customers to inspect their home-heating appliances and perform any needed maintenance necessary to avoid any health or safety hazards.

It's for Safety - Now is the time to perform maintenance on home-heating appliances to check that they can be operated safely and efficiently. Home owners and renters alike are beginning to turn on their furnaces for the first time in months. Heating appliances should be serviced annually to keep them operating safely and efficiently. A licensed heating contractor or SoCalGas can provide this service.

It's for Health - Failure to perform annual maintenance on gas appliances may result in exposure to carbon monoxide, which can cause nausea, drowsiness, flu-like symptoms, and even death.

It Saves Money - Since home heating typically accounts for more than half of the monthly winter gas bill, the best way to keep bills lower is to get gas appliances serviced.

Tips from SoCalGas for a safe, warm, and energy-efficient winter:

- Have natural gas furnaces checked at least once a year by a licensed heating contractor or SoCalGas.
- Vacuum and clean regularly in and around the furnace, particularly around the burner compartment to prevent a build-up of dust and lint.
- Never store items in, on or around the appliance that can obstruct airflow.
- Most forced-air units have a filter that cleans the air before heating and circulating it throughout the home. Check furnace filters every month during the heating season and clean or replace the filter when necessary.
- When installing a new or cleaned furnace filter, be sure to re-install the front panel door of the furnace properly so it fits snugly; never operate the furnace without the front-panel door properly in place because doing so may create the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Check the appearance of the flame. If the flame is yellow, large and unsteady, the furnace needs to be inspected immediately by a licensed heating contractor or SoCalGas to have the condition corrected.
- Using an unvented gas heater in your home is dangerous and a violation of the California Health and Safety Code.
- Never use your oven, range or outdoor barbecue to heat your home because these appliances are not designed for this purpose.

While maintaining natural gas appliances is always the homeowner's responsibility, at a customer's request, SoCalGas can perform free appliance safety checks. To schedule an appointment, go to socalgas.com (search "SCHEDULE APPOINTMENT") or call SoCalGas at (800) 427-2200 or (800) 342-4545 in Spanish. For more information on furnace safety, visit SoCalGas' website at socalgas.com (search "FURNACE SAFETY"). For other energy saving information, contact the South Bay Environmental Services Center (SBESC) – a program of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments @ www.sbesc.com 310-371-7222 and ask about our programs.