

Take it with you: Holiday advice from National Grid

As Brits prepare for the summer holidays rising numbers are ditching hotels and resorts for accommodation from private rental websites

15 Jul 2016

- **Rental accommodation could pose hidden deadly risks with almost half of Brits surveyed not checking if there was a working Carbon Monoxide alarm at their rented holiday accommodation**
- **National Grid's 'Take it with You' campaign is encourage people to take a small, portable audible CO alarm on their holiday**

National Grid is urging holidaymakers to protect themselves by taking a Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarm to ensure their summer vacation doesn't end in tragedy.

National Grid has undertaken a research project to find out how prepared holidaymakers are to avoid the risk of CO poisoning at privately rented holiday accommodation.

Results showed that 50 per cent of people surveyed simply aren't worried by the issue while 47 per cent didn't check whether there was a CO alarm in the property they stayed at on their last holiday. The vast majority of those surveyed (84 per cent) also didn't have a portable CO detector.

Other statistics revealed that many people don't recognise the main indicators of a potentially faulty gas appliance such as excessive condensation in the group (79 per cent unaware), yellow or orange flame (77 per cent unaware), pilot light that blows out easily (69 per cent unaware) black or brownish marks and yellow stains around the gas appliance (69 per cent unaware). Of those surveyed 19 per cent didn't know any of the indicators, while 17 per cent thought there were no indicators.

Phil Clarke, Head of Gas Operations for National Grid's London Network, said: "Carbon Monoxide poisoning can be fatal and every year we hear of tragedies that could easily have been avoided.

"Our 'Take it With You' campaign urges holidaymakers to take a small, simple CO alarm with them as a life-saving precaution."

He added: "With holidaymakers increasingly shunning hotels and resorts in favour of homes from private rental websites it's important that we remind them to check that the gas appliances are safe.

"Most people are not gas safety experts so the best advice is that they take a CO alarm with them."

The consequences of ignoring the danger can be tragic.

National Grid's campaign is being supported by the parents of Francesca Dingley, a 22-year-old Bristol University graduate from Surrey who died while on a gap year teaching English in China as a result of carbon monoxide leaking from a faulty boiler.

Francesca's father Mark Dingley observed that: "Like many other people these days, I use Owners Direct or AirBNB to book holiday apartments. I have no idea what safety checks have been carried out on these places. And this includes the UK.

"Taking a CO detector is now an essential travel item for me, my family and our friends but only since what happened to Francesca."

Carbon Monoxide can be released when gas-powered appliances are not functioning properly or when they have been installed incorrectly, allowing exhaust CO to filter into living areas. It is odourless, colourless and difficult to detect.

Known as the 'silent killer' carbon monoxide poisoning kills over 50 people a year in the UK with 4,000 attending hospital with carbon monoxide symptoms. A carbon monoxide detector costs as little as £15 and can easily be transported to holiday or temporary accommodation.

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Notes for editors

National Grid: 'Take It With You' - Summary of research results

1. Do you genuinely know what this phone number is - 0800 111 999?

82% don't know what the number to ring if they need to report a gas or carbon monoxide emergency.

What are your top two considerations when choosing UK or foreign holiday accommodation?When choosing holiday accommodation, safety in case of a faulty gas or electricity appliance or from a fire made it into the top two considerations of only 3.1% of people.

2. What are the top three things you're likely to buy from an airport for a holiday?

Only 2.7% said getting a CO alarm was likely to be in their top three purchases at an airport before going on holiday.

3. When you last stayed in any type of holiday accommodation which had a gas appliance, did you check whether there was a working CO alarm?

47% of Brits admit they didn't check whether the gas appliance was working properly in their last holiday accommodation.

4. Can carbon monoxide poisoning be fatal?

6.4% of Brits either said CO poisoning is not fatal, weren't sure or didn't know what CO poisoning is.

5. How worried are you about carbon monoxide poisoning?

Despite the devastating effects of carbon monoxide poisoning, a majority of people (50.6%) say they're not worried about it.

6. What, if anything, can indicate a potentially faulty gas appliance?

The following didn't recognise the main indicators of a potentially faulty gas appliance:

- Excessive condensation in the room – 79%
 - Yellow or orange flame – 77%
 - Pilot light that blows out easily – 69%
 - Black or brownish marks and yellow stains around the gas appliance – 69%
- 19% didn't know any of the indicators, while 17% thought there were no indicators

7. What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

The following didn't recognise these symptoms of CO poisoning:

- Breathlessness – 59%
- Dizziness – 44%
- Headaches – 35%
- Nausea - 34%

8. Where is the best place to put a carbon monoxide (CO) detector in holiday accommodation?

23% either admitted they didn't know where to place a CO detector in holiday accommodation or wrongly said it should be placed low down near the floor

9. Do you possess a portable holiday carbon monoxide detector?

84% of Brits do not possess a portable holiday CO detector.

Regional Information:

On behalf of National Grid, between 29th June and 4th July 2016 Opinion Matters researched 1,620 UK adults who have been on holiday in 2016 or are planning to do so.

The research conducted adheres to the MRS Codes of Conduct (2010) in the UK and ICC/ESOMAR World Research Guidelines. Opinion Matters is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office and is fully compliant with the Data Protection Act (1998).

East of England

44% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working

Just 5% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

59% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

London

53% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 3% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

43% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Midlands

48% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 2% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

49% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

North East

43% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 3% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

48% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

North West

45% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 2% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

52% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Northern Ireland

44% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

None of those surveyed ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

41% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Scotland

45% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 4% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

49% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

South East

53% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 4% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

57% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

South West

47% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 5% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

52% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Wales

53% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 4% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

51% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Yorkshire

42% say that when they last stayed in holiday accommodation that had a gas appliance they did not check that it was working.

Just 3% ranked safety amongst their top two considerations when choosing holiday accommodation.

52% are not worried about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Other information

Carbon monoxide symptoms can be confused with flu or other illnesses such as headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse and loss of consciousness. Other signs that could point to carbon monoxide poisoning are:

- Your symptoms only occur at the place where you are staying
- Your symptoms disappear when you leave the property and come back when you return
- Other members of the household, including pets, are experiencing symptoms and they appear at a similar time
- Gas appliances burning with orange or yellow flames instead of blue flames
- Sooty stains on or near appliances
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out
- Increased condensation inside windows

If you are experiencing the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning seek medical help and IF in the UK call the National Gas Emergency Service immediately on 0800 111 999.

To find a Gas Safe registered engineer visit www.gassaferegister.co.uk or call 0800 408 5500.

For more information on gas safety and carbon monoxide visit the website links below:

<http://www2.nationalgrid.com/UK/Safety/Safety-in-the-home/>

<http://www2.nationalgrid.com/UK/Safety/Gas-emergency/>

www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.
- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

National Grid undertakes no obligation to update any of the information contained in this release, which speaks only as at the date of this release, unless required by law or regulation.

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