

Home Safety Council Accepts Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance Sponsorship

Arlington, VA 22201

June 15 2007

PRESS RELEASE:

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Dealers and Builders in Arizona and Nevada Finding Answers by Working with the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance

Arlington VA. – March 14, 2007 – In view of the outstanding 26-year safety record of vent-free appliances in the U.S., the Home Safety Council (HSC) has accepted the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance as an official sponsor of the HSC's Expert Network. As the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to preventing home related injuries, the HSC provides several national programs to educate people of all ages how to be safer in and around their homes. The HSC's Expert Network is a free online resource for fire and life safety professionals across the country.

The Vent-Free Alliance's affiliation with HSC was launched in February 2007 by the publication of an article titled "Vent-Free Gas Appliances – Know the Facts" by Mary S. Carson, Program Director for the Vent-Free Alliance, in the HSC's online issue of The Bottom Line, an exclusive monthly column by leading national home safety experts (see Appendix A). In addition, the Vent-Free Alliance will soon post a PowerPoint presentation about vent-free supplemental gas heating appliances on the HSC's Expert Network web page (www.homesafetycouncil.org) for training officers of all fire departments in the U.S.

"With over 17 million vent-free appliances operating safely in American homes, this sponsorship is an acknowledgement of the excellent safety record of vent-free gas products in the U.S.," said Sue Walker, Chairman of the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance. "The Vent-Free Alliance is delighted to team up with the Home Safety Council to educate fire fighters throughout the country about the proven safety features that have made vent-free gas products trustworthy for heating in American homes."

All U.S. gas code groups and 49 states allow the sale and installation of vent-free appliances. Every vent-free gas product sold in the U.S. is equipped with a precision-engineered Oxygen Detection Safety-Pilot (ODS), which automatically shuts off the gas supply if the oxygen level in the room approaches a defined minimum set by American National Standard (ANSI) Z21.11.2. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has stated that it is not aware of any documented incident in the CPSC In-Depth Investigation (IDI) database of fatal CO poisoning associated with an ODS-equipped vent-free gas heating product.

Codes in Arizona and Nevada Allow Vent-Free Gas Appliances

Arizona and Nevada have recently recognized the International Construction Code and International Association of Plumbers and Mechanical Officials - Uniform Mechanical Code. This new acceptance has caused many consumers to ask about vent-free products and how they are used. Sue Walker, chairman, and Mary Carson, program director, of the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance have been working with Southwest Gas Corporation in Phoenix, AZ and Las Vegas, NV, to educate plumbers, HVAC professionals, inspectors, area dealers and builders about the technology and usefulness of vent-free gas appliances. According to home builders in Nevada, vent-free technology offers solutions to codes that restrain the builders from installing vents through the wall in buildings built in close proximity to one another. Several new high rise condos are now installing vent-free fireplaces in the city of Las Vegas.

According to Bill Laub, Senior Service Planner for Southwest Gas, “The Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance has been an invaluable resource to Southwest Gas with our introduction of vent-free products in southern Nevada. This included many visits, to the one-on-one meetings with local building code officials, and meetings with other authorities and interested parties to finally meeting with local builders and their purchasing staffs about vent-free products. If you have a question about anything having to do with vent-free gas products, there is a 99% chance you could instantly find the answer on one of the industry’s best product websites (www.ventfree.org). And, if by chance, you had information new to the industry, Mary S. Carson has always been just a phone call or email away. The Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance is truly unique in this day and age and we appreciate it.”

From the retailing front lines, several dealers in Arizona have pointed out that vent-free gas appliances are the right answer when flexibility is important in home heating. “Our customers ask for vent-free products,” said Pledger Robertson, Owner of Arizona Gas Products in Scottsdale. “They are a great solution when a full chimney cannot be installed due to architectural constraints.”

Don Richardson, Owner of Arizona Fireplaces in Phoenix, agrees. “Vent-free products provide a great solution for a lot of difficult installation situations,” he said. “Outdoor living is HUGE in the Phoenix area and vent-free fireplaces are leading the charge!”

Vent-free appliances offer heating comfort both inside and outside the house, noted Russ Gibson, Manager of The Weather Shack in Mesa. “Backyard living is popular here and both landscapers and homeowners find that the design of vent-free fireplaces really fits their needs. In addition, vent-free log sets are easy to install. Best of all, they get the heat into the home, not up the chimney.”

Because vent-free gas space heaters, fireplaces, logs, inserts, and stoves operate on natural gas or propane, they can easily and affordably be placed almost anywhere in the home, even in the middle of a room. Vent-free products range from 5,000 to 40,000 Btu – including 8,000 to 10,000 Btu units for bedrooms and 2,000 to 6,000 Btu units for bathrooms.

For vent-free fireplaces and log sets, homeowners can choose from such wood styles as driftwood, oak, weathered oak, maple, pine, aspen, birch, and many others. With no wood to haul or ashes to clean out, homeowners appreciate the convenience, savings of time and effort, and ease of use of vent-free gas products. Vent-free logs are ideal for a quick installation in an existing fireplace. All that is needed is a gas line for 99.9 percent energy efficient heat. Nothing is lost up the chimney as the damper is closed.

The Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance is a coalition of members of GAMA – a national trade association representing more than 200 manufacturers of space heating and water heating appliances and equipment all certified to national ANSI standards. In addition to its appearance at the 2007 HPBA Show, the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance was recently featured in the 2007 National Association of HomeBuilders International Builder’s Show held in February in Orlando, Florida.

For a free copy of the 16-page Consumer Guide to Vent-Free Gas Products – which includes detailed sizing guidelines, and the results of independent studies on indoor relative humidity and indoor air quality – and other new publications on energy- and cost-savings, write to the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance, 2107 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22201, email to ventfree@gamanet.org, or visit www.ventfree.org.

APPENDIX A

Bottom Line: “Vent-Free Gas Appliances – Know the Facts”

By Mary S. Carson

February 2007

Did you know:

- Vent-free supplemental natural gas or propane fueled heaters are allowed in bedrooms and bathrooms in most areas of the U.S.
- Vent-free units have no restrictions relative to sleeping in a room with a vent-free appliance
- Vent-free units do not require an open window
- There are no CO incidents reported by the CPSC from an ODS-equipped vent-free appliance
- Vent-free natural gas or propane fueled appliances are allowed in 49 states
- Vent-free units are now allowed in every major code in the U.S.
- Since 1980, more than seventeen and one-half million American homes in 49 states have relied on vent-free gas space heaters, fireplaces, logs, inserts, and stoves for supplemental home heating. Vent-free products range from 5,000 to 40,000 Btu – including 8,000 to 10,000 Btu units for bedrooms and 6,000 Btu units for bathrooms. In most areas of the U.S. vent-free supplemental heaters are allowed in bedrooms as well as bathrooms, as long as they are wall hung, permanently installed and do not exceed the required Btu limit. These are the only restrictions relative to the use of vent-free gas appliances in bedrooms; otherwise, there are no restrictions relative to sleeping in the presence of a vent-free gas product.

In the past year, vent-free gas heaters have been unfairly maligned by a number of syndicated columns picked up by newspapers all over the country. These articles have falsely placed vent-free gas appliances in the same category as kerosene room heaters and they have advised consumers to ventilate these units to the outside and to never sleep in a room with an unvented room heater. With respect to the natural gas and propane fueled vent-free gas appliances, this advice has no basis in fact. A review of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) database that has been tracking these products for 25 years confirms that there has never been a documented poisoning or fatality resulting from CO emissions associated with a vent-free supplemental heating gas product.

As of January 2006, vent-free supplemental gas heating appliances are allowed in all major national building codes in the U.S. in forty-nine states. (California is the only state that does not yet allow the use of unvented appliances). The last major code body to accept their use was the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials.

It is also important to know that it is not necessary to open a window when using a vent-free gas appliance. The national product standard ANSI Z21.11.2, removed this language eight years ago, based on research showing it to be unnecessary. All natural gas or propane fueled unvented products are equipped with an Oxygen Detection Safety Pilot (ODS). Consumers need to make sure that they follow the recommended ventilation guidelines supplied by the manufacturer.

For more detailed information go to www.ventfree.org to review technical research and information on how the ODS operates. This site is provided by the members of the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance, which is a coalition of members of GAMA – a national trade association representing more than 200 manufacturers of space heating and water heating appliances and equipment all certified to national ANSI standards.

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