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Informational Bulletin 2015-10
Appliance Venting & Heating System Maintenance

Purpose:

This informational bulletin provides information on proper maintenance, inspection, and installation of appliances and their respective venting systems.

All fuel fired appliances require periodic inspection and maintenance. When maintenance and inspection is ignored, fuel fired appliances may not operate as designed. This can significantly change how your appliances operate which can lead to damage within the appliance, cause severe damage to the venting system, or in some cases lead to injury and loss of life.

PVC/CPVC Venting:

Many of the newer high efficiency heating and hot water systems utilize PVC as the recommended venting system by the appliance manufacturer. This product has provided a low cost alternative to more expensive venting systems. Products like PVC and CPVC have maximum safe operating temperatures as specified by their product manufacturers. Most high efficiency systems operate safely well below those maximum operating temperatures. The safety concern arises when fuel gas fired appliances operate for prolonged periods without the proper fuel conversion, maintenance, and inspection.

“Foam Core” style PVC is not permitted on a venting system. This type of PVC material should be replaced immediately as it was not designed to be used for fuel gas exhaust venting on any appliance installation.

Boilers, Hot Water Heaters, and Furnaces:

All plastic piping and fittings used to vent appliances shall be installed in accordance with the appliance manufacturer’s installation instructions, *provided the maximum set point of a fixed or adjustable, water and/or flue gas, high limit setting of the appliance, does not exceed the safe operating temperature of the venting material selected.** Where primer is required, it shall be of a contrasting color. (NFPA 54 12.5.3)

New Hampshire Fire Code Amendment shall be effective January 1, 2016

When boilers, hot water heaters, and furnaces use PVC for venting operate outside of their specified parameters, they can overheat causing severe damage to the appliance and the exhaust system.

PVC venting system damage can be noted by a brown or purple discoloring of the exhaust piping, low points or sagging of the piping, broken hangers, or separation of the venting system at the pipe joints. If you notice any of these items on your venting system, shut the unit OFF and call a qualified heating professional immediately.

General Inspection & Maintenance:

- All boilers and hot water heaters have a relief valve that needs to be tested and exercised on an annual basis. Relief valve manufacturers recommend replacing this safety device once every five (5) years. Please check with your heating professional.
- Have your clothes dryers inspected and cleaned annually by an appliance professional. Never attempt to disconnect a vent from a dryer that uses natural or propane gas. Leave this task to a licensed professional. Serious illness or death could occur.
- If you use a wood or pellet style heating appliance, have the unit thoroughly cleaned and inspected before operating the unit this heating season.
- Make sure your oil heating and chimney cleaning technicians are qualified through either industry certifications or organizations like the Better Business Bureau.
- Keep the area around all your heating appliances clear from debris, loose clothing, storage items and combustibles.
- Never hang or store anything near a venting system. Keep these areas readily accessible for maintenance and service.
- Never replace an appliance without the proper safety and compliance inspections from your local Building and/or Fire Official.

Many heating and fuel gas fired appliances will operate safely with a PVC, CPVC or Polypropylene venting system installed provided they receive routine maintenance and service as required by the appliance manufacturer. The key is regular maintenance, service and inspection by a qualified heating technician.

If you have any questions regarding the safety of your existing appliance or venting system, consult your qualified heating professional, local fire department, or the State Fire Marshal's Office for additional information.