**The re-launch of the All Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group was on the 13th July 2010 in the Attlee Room at the House of Lords**

**Speech by Stephanie Trotter, CO-Gas Safety**

– please note that the parts in blue and red were not part of the speech.

Thank goodness this All Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group has been re-launched.

There is still a huge need for Parliamentary action to prevent these unnecessary tragedies from the hidden killer carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Almost every MP has experienced a death or deaths in his or her constituency. Each death costs the country nearly £2 million (£1,683,810) and each injury costs on average £34,000, (according to DoT figures at 2008 prices), yet Governments continue to ignore simple measures recommended by its own Health and Safety Commission in 2000 - ten years ago.

Most people still don't know that CO can be emitted from faulty cooking and heating appliances powered by any fuel that burns. They also don’t know that less than 2% of CO can kill in under than 3 minutes (HSE website).
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/hid/spc/spctosd30.pdf>  Para 74 Table 23
74. The physiological effects on human individuals from carbon monoxide estimated from data collected are shown in Table 23 (Norsok Z013) and include:
**Table 23: Concentration vs. Effect for Carbon Monoxide exposure**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CO (conc)**  | **Effects**  |
| 1500 ppm  | Headache after 15 minutes, collapse after 30 minutes, death after 1 hour  |
| 2000 ppm  | Headache after 10 minutes, collapse after 20 minutes, death after 45 minutes  |
| 3000 ppm  | Maximum "safe" exposure for 5 minutes, danger of collapse in 10 minutes |
| 6000 ppm  | Headache and dizziness in 1 to 2 minutes, danger of death in 10 to 15 minutes  |
| 12800 ppm  | Immediate effect, unconscious after 2 to 3 breaths, danger of death in 1 to 3 minutes  |

(PPM means parts per million. Please note that 12,800PPM is 1.28%)

The Gas Emergency Service still has no equipment to test appliances for CO and most of their employees don't even have personal monitors to safeguard **their own** lives from a deadly gas, which cannot be sensed using human senses.
The HSE continues to ignore this vital work safety issue. Why?

In 2007, former MP for South East Cornwall, Colin Breed tabled an EDM to implement the recommendations made by the HSC in 2000, which were:-

1. A levy on the gas suppliers to pay for raising awareness of the dangers and for research and
2. That the Gas Emergency Service, which has a duty to ‘make safe’ from CO, carries and uses equipment to test appliances for CO.

CO is invisible and odourless so the present situation is as ridiculous as sending out people to ‘make safe’ from radiation without Geiger counters?
This EDM was signed by 121 MPs, **yet no government action followed**.

Barry Sheerman MP as Chairman of the Group has worked hard and run the work like a Select Committee - but there are almost no improvements and the number of deaths and injuries from CO confirm this so he needs support.

Since we started compiling \*statistics in 1995, we have recorded the \*names of 562 people who have died of CO (and we check each death with the Coroner concerned and most are very helpful because we send them our statistics every year) and also nearly 4,000 (3,772) people have been involved in CO incidents. We know we only see the tip of the iceberg. (We know this because sometimes we only hear of a case from a relative or a journalist who has written up a CO death due to being at the inquest for another death unrelated to CO, e.g. the death of Angela Pinkney).

The landlords’ gas safety inspection must surely be changed to include a test for CO and a record kept. To use visual signs to check whether there is a deadly gas, which cannot be seen, is madness surely?

After her tragedies in 1985, when her son, Gary died of CO and her daughter, Sheree was confined to a wheelchair, Molly campaigned for 25 years and she is here today, yet virtually nothing has been done.

CO-Gas Safety has been saying the same old things for 15 years.

There is one relatively new aspect. Urgent research is needed on the other toxins in fuel emissions (e.g. heavy metals) and how such toxins can build up in a room with a flueless appliance (a gas cooker for example).
See <http://www.co-gassafety.co.uk/other_toxins.html> and look up the Internet references.

On the 7th July on the Today Programme (Radio 4) see:-
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_8795000/8795426.stm>
Wade Allison, Professor of Physics at Oxford University
Today Interviewer ‘Isn’t it a fact that nuclear waste, particularly the most highly toxic waste, is highly dangerous?’
Professor Wade Allison, ‘Yes but there are lots of other highly dangerous things like the heavy metals from ordinary power stations and the oil spilling in the Gulf, all of these things dwarf the problem of radioactive waste.’

Just think how much more concentrated such toxins can be inside a home when there is a blocked flue. We don’t know what effect this has – could this be one explanation for Alzheimer’s?

The HSC recommendations, made in 2000, show what needs to be done and it is shameful to neglect CO in the 21st Century and action to prevent deaths would save the country money.

**So how many Ministers and MPs can Barry rely on, to get on with it at last? © Copyright CO-Gas Safety 2010**

\*Please note that to view our statistics on deaths and injuries visit [http://www.co-gassafety.co.uk/statistics.html](http://www.co-gassafety.co.uk/stats_and_analysis.html) and click on statistics to download our sheet.

\*To view the names of the dead please visit <http://www.co-gassafety.co.uk/deaths.html> and click to download the list of the names of the dead.