

CO-Gas Safety Unintentional Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Case Study

MICHAEL FROSDICK, Deceased in 2003



Age: 19

Fuel: Mains gas

Appliance & Location: Living room fire in his rented shared flat

Notes by CO-Gas Safety: This account of the devastation that Michael's death had on his family was kindly written for us by Michael's older brother, Andrew. Two men pleaded guilty to the manslaughter of Michael and his friend; they were sentenced to five and three years in prison as a result. The landlord continued renting several properties after his release and was fined in 2015 for further safety failings, such as electrics and fire safety.

Michael Frosdick

March 17th 2003 was going to be a special day for our family, with one couple celebrating their wedding anniversary. A surprise party had been arranged and people had gathered to celebrate. None of us realised that this would be the last time we would see my brother Michael alive.

Michael and his friend Keith had rented their first flat in Kitchener Road, Great Yarmouth just three weeks earlier. The flat was owned by a landlord, Stanley Rodgers. Neither he nor his handyman, Barry Stone, were registered with CORGI (the gas safety regulator at that time), as they should have been to carry out the work at the flat which resulted in both boys dying that night.

It was a cold night and the boys had put on their gas fire to keep warm. It had been fitted by Rodgers and Stone. Slowly the flat started to warm up. Both boys did not realise that the flue (which was for a previous appliance) had not been given the correct ventilation and that the landlord and his handyman had blocked up the flue, causing carbon monoxide to build up, slowly killing them.

Being told the heart-breaking news

I had just finished work on the night both boys were found dead but had been given a letter to give to my brother Michael. When I arrived at the flat, flashing blue lights filled the road. As I parked the car I could see a friend of my brother looking towards me saying 'sorry' over and over. I remember walking up to the flat door; I was wearing a suit and had the letter in my hand so I was not questioned and was able to get to the front door. As I got closer, a man in the door realised that I was not part of the crime scene and asked who I was. He told me 'you need to get home'.

When I arrived home two plain clothes officers greeted me in the kitchen. I remember hearing my mother saying over and over 'my baby is dead'. My family changed that night and has never been the same since. A few years later, my father sadly passed away. After Michael and Keith died he made it part of the rest of his life to make people aware how important it is to have gas appliances checked and audible alarms fitted. I always remember him going to my brother's grave every day, as he suffered from depression and would sit and talk to both boys, who are buried not far apart.

As for myself, a part of me died that day and every day I wish both Michael and my dad Brian could see the family I have created with my wife Lyn and my children Johnathan, Thomas and Chloe. I know that they would be a great uncle and grandad to them all.

Further distress for our family

I would also like to add a note that, although Rodgers and Stone were successfully prosecuted for manslaughter, they only served half their sentenced time in prison, and we were only informed of their release on the day they came out.

Andrew Page