

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
CPSC Warns of Carbon Monoxide Gas Hazard for Older Vent Caps
IMPORTANT NOTICE TO HOMEOWNERS !!

DRAFT



DRAFT

⚠ WARNING

Gas vent cap failures can be an Asphyxiation hazard and cause personal injury or death. Flue products of combustion must be able to freely vent to the outside with little resistance. A failed vent cap can collapse and fall down over the vent pipe blocking the flue gases. Gas fumes, which could contain carbon monoxide, can spill into living spaces resulting in personal injury or death.

Re-roofing or fumigating your home may be a good time to inspect the condition of your gas vent caps. Older vent caps may have weakened rivets that hold in place the outer shell and lid. If the rivets fail the lid can fall down over the vent pipe and block the flue gases. Weakened vent caps can not support the weight of fumigation tarps or objects placed on them. If there is any question of the integrity of the cap it is best to change it out. Today's round caps have been redesigned with a louvered design. The louvered cap will not inconspicuously collapse over the vent pipe opening. Oval caps are still the riveted style. Consumers in costal climate zones should accelerate the replacement schedule of older style vent caps which may corrode over a period of time. Consumers should have periodic inspections of gas fired equipment and vent caps. They can contact their local heating contractor to arrange such inspections. Show this notice to your contractor.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$700 billion annually. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can injure children. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals - contributed significantly to the 30 percent decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years. To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270, or visit CPSC's web site at www.cpsc.gov/talk.html. To join a CPSC email subscription list, please go to www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.asp. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov.

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VENT CAP FAILURES

Can you diagnose all of these failures?

4" Oval Vent

Missing cap

Built In 1980
Photo Taken 12/2005

4" Round Vent

Cap has fallen from vent onto roof

Built In 1980
Photo Taken 12/2005

4" Round Vent

NEVER INSTALL a larger sized cap over a vent pipe!

This one was duct taped to keep the cap from sliding down and blocking the flue pipe.

4" Round Vent

Broken lid half blocked

OLDER STEEL caps should be taken out of service

This one from 1965 is heavily rusted.

Which cap is blocking 98 percent of the vent opening?

A



B



Answer next page.

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The answer is cap A.

This is a view of the cap turned over so you can see inside. The three rivets have all failed and the wrapper and lid slid down up against the end of the inner sleeve. As you can see this failure is difficult to detect and it has blocked almost all of the opening. Undetected this can become a life threatening condition because the flue gases are spilling into the living space and not properly venting to the outside.

The vent gases may also contain carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an "invisible" killer. It is a colorless and odorless gas. Each year 10,000 people suffer from carbon monoxide poisoning, and 1,500 die from it. Early symptoms of CO poisoning are often mistaken for the flu.



Newer Safer Louvered Style Vent Caps



6" Cap

Used for larger furnaces and combination vent systems (two or more appliances).

5" Cap

Used for larger furnaces and combination vent systems.

4" Oval Cap

Used for wall heaters and venting in walls.

4" Cap

Used for furnaces and water heaters this is the most common size.

3" Cap

Used for smaller water heaters this size is not that common.