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HEATING HEALTH CHECK

*Sensible advice from the Heating Helpline on the importance of boiler maintenance
and what homeowners should expect from a reputable heating engineer.*

XX December 2009 – Heating our homes and our water is the biggest energy cost households face each month, yet many homeowners do not realise the importance of having their whole heating system regularly serviced.

Having your boiler checked and your heating system inspected will not only save money and energy, it could potentially avoid a terrible tragedy.

Gas is the most commonly used fuel for home heating systems across the country and although in principle it is completely safe, lack of routine maintenance means that around 50 people still needlessly die every year from preventable gas-related carbon monoxide poisoning.

The Government recognised trade association for heating engineers is the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA) and Chief Executive, Robert Higgs, comments, "Too many homeowners rely on old or inefficient boilers or heaters and the facts are that there are considerable numbers of gas fired appliances in use that are potentially dangerous.

"If your boiler is more than ten years old or has been infrequently serviced in the past, we strongly advise that you contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to inspect the system.

"Safety is of course the first priority but it is also false economy to forgo what should be an annual service and maintenance check – a well maintained boiler burns up to 10% less fuel than a poorly maintained one".

But often consumers do not know what they can expect from a boiler service. This 10-point guide from the Heating Helpline lists the work that a qualified, reputable heating engineer should typically complete:

- 1) Start with a visual check to ensure your boiler meets with the current standards
- 2) The boiler will be fired to identify any working faults

- 3) The casing will be removed to check the main components
- 4) A visual check that flue terminals are unobstructed and internal flue components are properly sealed
- 5) Gas controls will be adjusted to ensure that the burner is working efficiently
- 6) All boiler internals are cleaned
- 7) Gas tightness is tested to ensure that there are no leaks
- 8) Water samples taken to ensure quality
- 9) The system is flushed
- 10) Finally you should receive a report highlighting what your engineer has done to maintain your boiler

For more information on heating and boiler maintenance contact the free Heating Helpline on 0800 840 4069 or visit the website at:
www.heatinghelpline.org.uk.

Backed by the Heating and Ventilating Contractors' Association (HVCA), the Heating Helpline provides essential information on energy saving in the home, the importance of regular heating maintenance and offers dozens of money-saving solutions for homeowners.

Ends

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Note to Editors

Established in 1904, HVCA is the officially recognised organisation representing central heating contractors and exists to promote fair dealing and the sound installation of heating systems. Members who undertake gas installations are all Gas Safe Registered. As a trade association HVCA has also taken the unusual but highly commendable step of requiring all its members to undergo third party inspection and assessment, which verifies technical competence, commercial capability and customer service.

Caption for picture:

'Old boiler? Don't take risks – get it checked out by a qualified heating engineer.'