Oregon Households Without Power Can Keep Warm, Safely

by Bend Weekly News Sources

With the bitter cold combined with a lack of electricity, many in Washington and Oregon have struggled to stay warm this past week. Vent-free gas appliances, however, provide heat even when power is lost because of severe weather or emergency situations.

"In an emergency situation or power outage, people can rely on vent-free gas appliances to provide a safe, reliable and easy to use heating source," said Sue Walker, chairman of the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance. "Not only do they provide peace of mind for times such as these, but also today's vent-free gas heating appliances offer a cost-effective option for consumers."

While these appliances are similar to other space heating and hearth products, vent-free products do not vent to the outside, which allows all of the useable heat to stay in the room. Vent-free heaters, fireplaces, stoves and log sets are 99 percent efficient and can be installed into any of the 62 million U.S. homes that use either natural or propane gas.

In non-emergency situations, vent-free heating products are a popular supplementary heating source. Zone heating, or heating the rooms used most instead of the entire house, can help homeowners save hundreds of dollars a year on energy costs. Whether it is in a bedroom*, rec-room or family room, adding a vent-free heater helps give a new or remodeled room added ambiance and heat when needed.

Some news accounts report not to use un-vented or vent-free gas appliances in enclosed spaces, but every design-certified vent-free natural gas or propane heater is safe to use in the home because they are equipped with an oxygen detection safety (ODS) pilot. An ODS pilot is equivalent in function and reliability to an electrical circuit breaker, which turns off the unit if the room's oxygen levels drop around the unit. The ODS was added to vent-free products in 1980 and today, there are more than 17 million units installed across the U.S. with no reported carbon monoxide incidents. This fact has been confirmed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and a letter concerning this can be found at www.ventfree.org.

Converting wood-burning fireplaces to vent-free gas log sets eliminates the hassle and mess of hauling in wood, disposing of ashes, lighting kindling, tending the fire, and guarding against stray embers.

Design-certified vent- free gas heating products meet both the latest national standards and most rigorous air quality requirements and are available in various sizes that range from 2,000-40,000 BTU. Since a vent-free appliance can be added anywhere in a home that has access to gas, installation costs can range up to 60 percent less than the cost of installing vented appliances.

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