

Government urges public to stop using “energy-saving ring” on gas cookers to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) today (February 5) appealed to members of the public to stop using an "energy-saving ring" on gas cookers to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning accidents.

A carbon monoxide poisoning case was reported to the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health by Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH), which involved a 70-year-old female. She developed loss of consciousness after cooking with a gas cooker at home on February 3. She was immediately sent to TMH and was later transferred to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital for treatment. She is now in stable condition and has been discharged.

A preliminary investigation by the EMSD revealed that the type of the gas cooker has been approved by the Gas Authority and its operation was in order. During the incident, the two burners of the gas cooker were fitted with accessories, commonly known as "energy-saving rings", which were not supplied by the original gas cooker manufacturer. Coupled with poor indoor ventilation, there was an increase in the indoor carbon monoxide level, causing the accident. Upon receiving the information, the EMSD and the C&ED immediately conducted inspections at shops in various districts in Hong Kong. No "energy-saving rings" were found for sale in local market.

The EMSD emphasised that there have been several accidents involving "energy-saving rings", where testing results showed that when using a gas cooker with the "energy-saving ring", emissions of carbon monoxide increased substantially, which has significantly exceeded the safety standard specified in the Basic Safety Assessment under Approval of Domestic Gas Appliances. There was also no energy-saving effect as claimed. The EMSD urged the public to stop using any accessories not supplied by original cooker manufacturers, such as the "energy-saving rings", and to ensure adequate ventilation when using gas cookers by keeping kitchen windows open and exhaust fans operating. For proper use and maintenance of domestic gas cooking appliances, please visit the EMSD

website: www.emsd.gov.hk/en/gas_safety/gas_safety_tips_to_users/safe_use_proper_use_and_maintenance/domestic_gas_cooking_appliances/index.html.

Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas that is a by-product from incomplete combustion of any fuel that contains carbon. Exposure to a low concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to a range of symptoms such as dizziness, headaches, tiredness and nausea, whereas exposure to a high concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to impaired vision, disturbed co-ordination, unconsciousness, brain damage or even death. Members of the public are reminded to seek medical attention immediately if they suspect they may be developing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

â€‹The C&ED said that under the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance, it is an offence to supply, manufacture or import into Hong Kong consumer goods unless the goods comply with the general safety requirement for consumer goods. The maximum penalty for the offence is a fine of \$100,000 and an imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment on a subsequent conviction. Members of the public with information relating to "energy-saving rings" may make a report via the C&ED's 24-hour hotline 2545 6182, or via email (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).