



Buildings Bulletin 2012-005: In bedrooms, installation matters

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The DOB continues to update process and procedure, always with an eye for safety. With the recently released Buildings Bulletin 2012-005, they address safety in the bedroom.

2012-005 applies to gas-fired direct vent space-heating appliances - or in layman's terms, gas heaters installed within bedrooms. More specifically, the bulletin addresses two main concerns of in-room heaters, both related to scenarios when things go wrong. First, detecting the presence of carbon monoxide, and second, having a fail-safe way of shutting down the gas if it is detected.

The bulletin throws out a date in the future - September 30, 2013, by which all manufactured devices must be built with an integral factory assembled carbon monoxide detector with an automatic main gas shut-off valve. The immediate challenge of bridging the time between now and then is covered by the rest of the Bulletin, which cuts to the heart of the matter, installation.

From the DOB's perspective, installing heaters correctly will solve many problems before they start. The bulletin demands that the manufacturer's instructions, solely, must provide the correct procedure, to be followed by a licensed master plumber. This master plumber must file an LAA 1 or PW1 application for the install, providing clear verification that all mandated clearances - from adjacent openings or combustible surfaces are met.

If this sounds like a pretty strict guideline, it is. The DOB has decided to take no chances, ensuring that the installer take responsibility to complete the work correctly. They have no patience for on-the-fly modifications or retrofitting to the unit during installation which may lead to problems down the line. Accordingly, there's a single, right way to approach the job.

Beyond the installer, the DOB is requiring manufacturers to step up and take responsibility. The actual hardware must arrive with a certified label indicating that the unit has been safety tested and approved by the manufacturer. This places the burden of operational responsibility on the manufacturer. In the DOB's eyes, a correctly installed appliance should have no issues. More importantly - if issues appear, so too does the path for responsibility.

For all of the hundreds and thousands of units constructed around New York City, it's important to appreciate that the bedroom remains the most-used room in the house. Making this the safest room should be of paramount importance. That's why we're eager to support 2012-005.

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