



News Release

GAMA-An Association of Appliance & Equipment Manufacturers

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Product Divisions and Groups

Burner

Controls

Corrugated
Stainless Steel
Tubing

Direct Fired
Heater

Direct Heating

Food Service
Equipment

Fuel Cell

Furnace

Gas Air
Conditioning

Gas Appliance
Connector

Gas Detector

Gas Equipment
& Service

Gas Grill

Gas Venting
Products

General Products

Hydronics
Institute

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Air Heating

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Motor & Blower

Power
Generation

Relief Valve

Vent Free Gas
Products

Water Heater

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FLOOD-DAMAGED APPLIANCES SHOULD BE REPLACED, EXPERTS WARN.

Arlington, VA, September 17, 2003—With Hurricane Isabel bearing down on the east coast of the U.S. and bringing with it the possibility of severe flooding, it is important to remember that all flood-damaged plumbing, heating, cooling and electrical appliances and related systems should be replaced, rather than repaired. This warning was issued today by GAMA, the national trade association representing manufacturers of appliances, components and related products used in space heating and water heating, commercial food service and power generation. The organization also recommends that all work on flooded equipment be performed by a qualified, licensed contractor, not by homeowners.

The GAMA warning stems from past reports of accidents resulting from improper do-it-yourself repairs of flood-damaged appliances. One homeowner, for example, suffered severe burns in a flash fire that occurred when he tried to re-light the pilot on his flooded gas water heater. The Association stresses that not only gas equipment is at risk, but also units using oil or electricity as the energy source.

"Controls damaged by flood water are extremely dangerous," notes GAMA President Evan R. Gaddis. "Attempts to use equipment with defective gas or oil control devices can result in fires, flashbacks or explosions. And in the case of electric appliances, the result can be injury or even death from a powerful electric shock." The GAMA official noted that devices at risk include water heaters, furnaces, boilers, room heaters and air conditioners.

The Association stresses that the repair of flooded appliances and related systems (including damaged venting and electrical connections) is not a job for the do-it-yourselfer, no matter how skilled. This is particularly true of control valves, according to GAMA officials. These components are manufactured to extremely close tolerances. Once submerged in floodwater, they must be replaced. Field repairs should never be attempted by the homeowner.

Even when controls appear to be operative, the unit should not be used after floodwaters recede. "It may work for a while," Gaddis explains, "but it will deteriorate over time.

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It might take a week, a month, or even a year, but once any control has been under water, it presents a serious hazard...fire or explosion in the case of gas controls, fire or shock in the case of electric equipment."

Because so many things can go wrong as a result of floodwater, it's usually cheaper, and always safer to replace, rather than repair, Gaddis stresses. "You can have a control valve replaced, but there may be damage to other parts of the unit, like venting, piping, burners and insulation. There are just so many things that can go wrong, the wise choice is always to start over with new equipment," the GAMA official declared.

In some instances, government aid may be available to help consumers finance the replacement of flood-damaged heating equipment. For information, homeowners should contact any of the offices of the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), set up to help flood victims.

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