

# Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance

## **VENT-FREE GAS PRODUCTS AND INDOOR AIR QUALITY (IAQ) Response of the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance To Critique of the American Lung Association and their "Health Home" Partners Heat & Glo, Heatilator, Quadra-Fire (HHTI)**

***Foreword:** Most manufacturers of vent-free gas appliances also manufacture direct vent gas fireplaces and firmly stand behind both technologies as fine, safe solutions to homeowners' desire for attractive, heat producing hearth products. Each category provides some unique benefits and applications that are complementary, even in the same home. As supporters of both direct-vent and vent-free technology, our objective in this document is to provide the balance missing from the ALA/HHTI position.*

### **SITUATION OVERVIEW:**

Since the early 90's when vent-free gas technology was applied to hearth products, the HHTI brands have attempted, via varied strategies, to influence codes groups, distributors and dealers, trade publications, and trade associations to condemn vent-free technology. However, none of these strategies have been backed up with substantiated facts or research.

When responding to these attacks, the vent-free gas products industry has prevailed in all forums due to the vent-free gas products' safety record and independent IAQ research, which was openly and objectively reviewed. The result is that vent-free gas products are now fully included in the new International Codes ('96), and the IAPMO Mechanical Code ('06), and also won acceptance by state legislatures in New York ('98) and Massachusetts ('02). More than 1 million consumers each year (more than 17 million since 1980) choose the appliances backed by a vast network of supportive, responsible distributors and dealers.

Earlier this year, The American Lung Association (ALA) "Health House" program issued its initial website release indicating ALA partnership with the three brands of Hearth and Home Technologies Inc. Through this partnership, HHTI receives visibility promoting their brands and the benefits of direct vent fireplaces, and an opportunity to disparage vent-free gas fireplaces.

The Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance is a coalition of members of the Vent-Free Gas Products Division of GAMA, an association of appliance and equipment manufacturers.

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**MISSTATEMENTS, INACCURACIES, AND OMITTED KEY INFORMATION  
IN THE ALA HEALTH HOUSE/HHTI RELEASES:**

**Regarding Direct-Vent Gas Fireplaces:**

- Though safe, these appliances are not 100% sealed combustion as stated. The ANSI Z21.88 product safety standard permits as much as 4% leakage (of by-products of combustion) from the combustion system of a direct vent-fireplace. That leakage rate is considered safe and there is no need to misrepresent it.
- The “allowed” leakage rate of 4% can increase during conditions of negative pressure, which is common in some new homes with unusually tight construction. Sealants can break down over the life of the fireplace resulting in additional leakage.
- As with all gas appliances, safe operation of direct-vent gas fireplaces is dependent on proper installation and on-going monitoring/maintenance of the vent system.

**Regarding Vent-Free Gas Products:**

- There is no recognized scientific evidence that there are negative health effects associated with the use of vent-free gas products. There is independent scientific research\* that confirms that vent-free gas products meet the most recognized measures/guidelines for safe exposure.
- In 2005, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) confirmed that since 1980, with roughly 16 million units in use, CPSC has no record of any deaths due to emissions from a vent-free gas product. No other gas heating appliance category has that enviable safety record.
- Independent scientific research<sup>1</sup> has confirmed “that for the vast majority (99%) of homes in the U.S. vent-free gas heating products do not generate enough water vapor to foster mold growth.” In fact, during the heating season, homeowners benefit from the limited moisture produced by vent-free gas products.
- All eight (8) model U.S. building codes have carefully reviewed these products and approved them for installation. No code has ever withdrawn or later restricted their permitted use. The National Fuel Gas Code first expanded the applications (to bedroom and bathroom) and other codes followed.

*The Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance is a coalition of equipment and component manufacturers of the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association whose primary missions are consumer information and education, research, and coordination with local, state and national codes, regulatory, and legislative bodies.*

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<sup>1</sup> See detailed research results and other relevant industry information at <http://www.ventfree.org>, the website of the Vent-Free Gas Products Alliance.