

“KEEPING PACE” - #17

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GAS FURNACES:

P.A.C.E. has thoroughly investigated over 2000 fires of every conceivable type. Yet in the thirteen years since its inception (1974), P.A.C.E. has only once blamed a fire on a gas furnace or gas heater (and the jury disagreed with us on that one.) Thus, a gas furnace or a gas heater fire is an extremely rare occurrence. The above photograph shows what looked like an obvious furnace fire. Actually the fire was caused by the apartment dweller, who put combustible materials in this closet too close to the furnace. Poor housekeeping is the usual cause of “furnace” fires, in our experience, and fires which seem to originate from a gas heater or a gas hot water heater.

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ELECTRIC FURNANCES:

P.A.C.E. has also never yet found an electric furnace which caused a fire. Of course, short circuits do occasionally occur in their plastic insulated supply cables.



OIL FURNACE FIRES:

The above photograph shows an oil furnace fire in which nothing else burned. The furnace's pump had continued to pump oil into the furnace without its being ignited soon enough by its electric spark igniter. There is a back-up safety device which is supposed to shut off the pump within 30 seconds whenever the oil does not ignite, but this safety device did not function either. P.A.C.E. has investigated about six oil furnace fires where this same sequence of events has occurred.

Sincerely,

Frederick F. Franklin, P.E.
Forensic Engineer