

Osh Residents' Dodgy Heaters

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As winter temperatures remain low in the southern city of Osh, people in high-rise apartments are rigging up home-made stoves to provide heat.

The frequency of scheduled power cuts – designed to prevent electricity provision from collapsing completely – mean urban residents have to find new ways of keeping warm and cooking meals. Buildings in Osh are normally heated from a network of hot water pipes that run from a power station, but the system has broken down in some apartment blocks.

According to reporter Janar Akaev, “burjuyki” – stoves fuelled by coal or firewood – are now a common sight, installed either on a balcony or in one of the rooms, with a chimney made to poke out of the window.

One elderly woman said she was spending all her monthly pension just to buy coal.

Osh’s deputy mayor Muhiddin Mamasydykov said the use of such stoves was against health and safety rules, since people were at risk both of poisoning themselves from the fumes and of burning their flats down.

However, given the circumstances, he said, the city authorities would only investigate if they received a formal complaint from neighbours.

Deputy fire service chief Ghulamiddin Bozorboev confirmed that domestic fires were becoming more frequent.

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