

Relevant Legislation

Gas Appliances (Safety) Regulations 1992
Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

General

Most buildings have access to a gas supply which is either fed from the mains or bottled. The effects of misuse or neglect of gas systems can be extremely serious. It is, therefore, particularly important for managers to consider potential risks when dealing with the gas installation and gas fuelled equipment.

The risks associated with the use of gas are:

- Fire.
- Explosion.
- exposure to the by-products of combustion, such as carbon monoxide.

The main requirements of the above regulations, which require direct action by the County Council, are:

- to design gas installations safely and with a view to anticipated use.
- to maintain gas installations in a safe condition.
- to have an annual safety check on fixed gas appliances.
- only to allow approved fitters (those who are on the Gas Safe Register) to work on gas installations.

Other requirements which the County Council's approved contractors must comply with are:

- to supply gas equipment which complies with current manufacturers' standards.
- to use safe systems of work when installing and maintaining gas equipment.

Inspection

The County Council is responsible for maintaining all fixed gas appliances within its premises. These should be inspected by competent CORGI approved gas engineers on a 12 monthly basis. This is organised by Property Services in most cases. If individual establishments have equipment which is not included in the inspection schedule, for example, if they have delegated responsibility for it, then they must make their own arrangements.

Although portable gas appliances such as butane gas heaters are not covered by specific gas regulations, arrangements should be put into place to check these appliances routinely. Detailed guidance on the use of temporary heating appliances is included as a separate section in this policy.

Building Works

It is a requirement that when works are commissioned, which may affect the gas installation, building contractors make arrangements to identify the location of pipelines and appliances. If necessary, CORGI approved contractors should be engaged to take appropriate action, such as removing pipes. Specific precautions are required for this work due to the dangers of working near underground services.

In the majority of cases, repair work and building works are commissioned centrally by the Property Services Division based at County Hall. Property Services will always utilise approved contractors. They will also be in a better position to provide the necessary drawings, and any other information required, to the contractor. On completion of new works or modifications to gas installations a commissioning certificate will be requested from the gas contractor to be kept on the premises file. A copy of this certificate will be left for the occupier of the site when the work is completed.

On the rare occasions when this service is not used, similar standards should be applied by those responsible for commissioning work.

Landlord's Responsibilities

Landlords owning or managing living accommodation which is let to individuals as part of a tenancy agreement have additional responsibilities relating to the gas installation and the information which must be provided to their tenants.

When the Council is acting in this capacity detailed information will be provided for tenants.

Checklist for Occupiers of Premises:

- Do not locate the following in basements:
 - A gas storage tank/vessel
 - An appliance fuelled by LPG which has an automatic ignition device or pilot light.

- Never allow anyone to interfere with gas equipment, installations or storage vessels and thereby cause a danger to other persons
- Never allow anyone to interfere with electrical equipment/earth bonding cables associated with the gas installation and thereby cause danger to other persons.
- Never store combustible materials in any meter box or compound or anywhere above or near fires even if they have guards on them.
- Keep access to the emergency control (such as a gas shut off valve or stop cock) permanently available. Make sure markings and information on gas pipes and appliances are recognisable and a key or lever is attached to the valve spindle.
- When installations have been completed, no changes should be made to the permanent ventilation arrangements in buildings unless a competent engineer has been consulted. Ensure all ceiling voids and duct risers are adequately ventilated.
- Make sure that the information provided by installers of equipment is kept available.
- Make sure employees are informed of the emergency procedures to deal with gas incidents through appropriate signs and that they know the locations of emergency controls.

Individual Responsibilities

Remember that no-one should use a gas appliance if they have reason to suspect that:

- there is an insufficient supply of air for the appliance
- the removal of products of combustion is not being carried out
- there is inadequate oxygen for the people in the room
- there is any gas escaping from the appliance or fittings
- there is a fault on the appliance making it dangerous.

If any of the above applies the appliance must be labelled unsafe and shut off until further action can be taken. If arrangements to have appliances inspected are made by the occupiers, records should be kept of the date of inspection, defects identified and remedial action taken. A commissioning certificate should be obtained before re-use.

No person should carry out any work to a gas installation or equipment unless they are competent, have been authorised to do so and are CORGI registered.

Any incident involving a gas leak fire, carbon monoxide poisoning or explosion should be reported to the Health and Safety Team immediately. Some gas incidents may be reportable under the Reporting of Injuries, Dangerous Occurrences and Diseases Regulations 1995.

Gas Escapes - In the Event of a Leak

The gas supplier is required to curtail the escape of gas within 12 hours of notification of a leak. The occupier must take all steps to shut down the gas supplies and inform the supplier IMMEDIATELY of the situation. The supply must not be reconnected until all necessary repairs have been undertaken by a competent person. A notice similar to that reproduced on the following page should be in place at the gas meter and may also be used in kitchens, laboratories and other areas to give emergency information.



GAS

In the event of a gas escape shut off the gas by:

If gas continues to escape, immediately notify the suppliers emergency gas service on:

0800 111999

Open doors and windows to get rid of the gas and leave them open until the leak has been stopped and any build up of gas dispersed.



Do not use naked lights.

Do not switch the lights, or any other electrical equipment on or off; switches produce sparks that would ignite escaping gas.

Do not reopen the supply until remedial action has been taken by a competent person to prevent gas escaping again.

Arrangements within Children's Services

Schools are likely to have some equipment which does not fall into the inspection schedule organised by Property Services Division. Examples of such equipment could be hot metal equipment, food technology appliances or anything purchased by, or gifted to the school. Governors are responsible for making their own arrangements to have this equipment inspected.

Property Services Division is in a position to provide a service to schools to carry out these inspections. Appliances can be added to the inventory of gas appliances for which the LEA has always been responsible.

It should be noted that hot metal equipment is of a specialist nature, the County Council will therefore use a specialist company to carry out the tests on such equipment when schools make the request for inspection.

The mechanism for schools that wish to appoint the Property Services Division in this capacity is to send a list of all the appliances for which Governors are responsible to the Property Services Division at County Hall.

Schools choosing not to use the above Property Service must make their own arrangements for gas safety testing. They are, however, strongly recommended to use contractors from the approved list issued by the Property Services Division.

A governing body could be held liable for an incident arising from a sub-standard appliance which has been designed installed or maintained by unqualified Personnel. It could also commit offences for inadequate assessment or monitoring of the safety performance of an outside contractor should that contractor not be on the approved list.

Should a Manager of any establishment within the arrangement outlined above have concerns regarding the inspection and/or maintenance of the fixed gas installations within their premises they should contact the Property Services Help Desk on 01670 622339 or by [clicking here](#).

The Corporate Health and Safety Team are available to provide further guidance and advice on any proposed procedures.

Prior to publication/implementation all proposed procedures must be discussed with the lead contact Health and Safety Officer via the appropriate Directorate/Divisional Safety Group. This step is necessary to verify that there is no variance with the legislation on which the policy is based.