

POLICY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

PART C ARRANGEMENTS

Section 24

GAS SAFETY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gas appliances are used widely across the premises and work activities managed by Barnet Council. The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIU Regs) contain specific duties for employers who control gas appliances or pipework to ensure that they are operated and maintained in a safe condition so as to prevent risk of injury to any person.

2. AIM

The aim of this arrangement is to set out the procedures that must be followed to comply with the GSIU Regs and other health and safety legislation and to establish a corporate standard for Delivery Units to follow in their local arrangements.

3. SCOPE

This arrangement applies to all gas systems, which includes installations, appliances and flues, in all council premises, including domestic and commercial properties let by the council. Reference should also be made to the Corporate Health and Safety Policy – Section 26 Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council has a general responsibility to establish and monitor corporate health, safety and welfare standards that ensure compliance with health and safety legislation.

Directors have a duty to ensure that adequate and appropriate gas safety management arrangements are established within their Delivery Unit and that these arrangements comply with statutory obligations and the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

Premises managers have a duty to ensure that a gas appliance is not used if they know, or have reason to suspect, that it cannot be used without constituting a danger to any person.

5. SPECIFIC DUTIES UNDER THE REGULATIONS

Purchase of gas equipment and gas fittings

When purchasing gas equipment or fittings as described in the GSIU Regs, the officer must ensure that the product is of good construction and sound materials, of adequate strength and size to secure safety and of a type appropriate for the gas that is to be used.

Appendix A to this document is a guide to help purchasers to select appropriate equipment.

Once the purchase has been made, all gas equipment must be fitted by a competent Gas Safe registered person.

Design of gas systems

DU management, or the states Service if the commission work, must ensure that any person who designs a gas installation, however small, has the necessary knowledge and experience to design systems that will be safe. The knowledge must include types of equipment, dangers associated with its use or location, current standards of gas safety and an understanding of the needs of the user.

Any information about the location and the proposed use of gas installations that may influence the safety of the design must be passed to the designer at the beginning of the design process.

Maintenance and servicing

All checks for gas safety must be made by a competent Gas Safe registered person.

All gas fittings and flues must be checked by a competent person within 12 months of being installed then at intervals of no more than 12 months. They must also ensure that arrangements have been made for gaining access to them, for example when a tenant cannot be contacted or refuses entry. These checks must include the following factors, which are essential to the safe operation of the appliances, in addition to all the requirements of the manufacturer's maintenance manual.

- The effectiveness of the flue
- Adequate supply of combustion air
- Operating pressure and heat input
- Operation so as to ensure safe functioning

Details must be obtained from contractors of the methods used, for example carbon monoxide measurement, to carry out the above checks.

The GSIU Regulations make specific requirements for the information that must be recorded at each safety check. The minimum information required is listed below.

- The date on which the appliance or flue was tested
- The address of the premises
- The name and address of the landlord
- A description of the appliance or flue and its location
- Any defects identified
- Any remedial action taken
- Confirmation that all the necessary checks were made
- Name and signature of the person carrying out the check
- The registration number of the person carrying out the check and also, if applicable, the registration number of that persons employer.

A copy of this recorded information must be made available on request to the tenant or any lawful occupier within 28 days of their request.

Liaison with users of gas equipment

Written instruction on the safe use of gas equipment must be provided to all potential users. Tenants and premises Managers or their representatives should be told or shown the location of meters and shut-off valves and how to use them.

After gas equipment is installed at any premises for use by the occupier, all manufacturer's instructions must be left at the premises. Details of comments and complaints from users should be recorded and routinely assessed by the premises manager as part of the review process.

Procedures for notification of defects, repairs or emergencies

Clear information must be provided to all premises occupiers on;

- who to call in case of defect or emergency and
- any obvious defects or signs that may suggest a dangerous condition, for example, a gas leak or ventilation problems.

Suitable instructions on any immediate action to take, for example, shutting off the supply and ventilating, not smoking and not using electrical equipment, should be provided at each premises. These instructions should also be given verbally when emergency calls are received. The on-site information may be in the form of posters, signs or documents and must be suitable for all types of equipment in use.

When providing information to users, consideration must be given to communication factors such language difficulties or literacy problems. Information and instructions must be in plain language appropriate to the user. Translations into other languages and Braille, or the use of pictures and verbal briefings should be used when necessary.

Services must produce written procedures covering the actions to be taken to deal with both foreseeable defects and emergencies. Adequate competent cover must be maintained to deal with emergencies at any time.

Procedure for the selection of gas contractors

Competence of gas contractors must be assessed. It is not sufficient just to ask for a copy of a Gas Safe Registration Entry, as these can be forged. At very least, contact Gas Safe to check a contractor's registration and obtain written or e-mail confirmation **before** engaging the contractor.

The Regulations state that any person who works on any gas installation or equipment **must be competent**. The only accepted grade of competence at this time is the Gas Safe Register. A competent person must be Gas Safe registered. Services must evaluate the competence of the contractor at the selection stage. Information about standards of checking and monitoring of contractors is contained in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy- Section 6 – Contractors.

Monitoring contractors' work

A reasonable level of monitoring must be carried out for the following reasons:

- to ensure contract compliance
- to check that the work meets basic gas safety standards
- to check the continuing competence of contractors and their employees
- to ensure that the contractor works safely.

Monitoring must be undertaken by a competent person with the authority to take action if problems are found. Monitoring must be administered in such a way as to include all contractors and all types of activities

The installer carries the responsibility of ensuring that the equipment is fitted properly and is safe to use. The council must ensure that factors such as the environment and the use of the installation are safe and comply with manufacturer's instructions.

Risk assessment

Any person commissions gas installations or allows the use of gas equipment at work must undertake a generic risk assessment on gas safety. The purpose of this is to identify and address hazards and risks associated with equipment, its location, its users and the level of its use. Control measures, based on the risk assessment, must be established to reduce health and injury risks.

Review

Like any management system, gas arrangements and risk assessments must be reviewed regularly and any trends or problems noted used to make changes to the system. The review process should take account of any relevant information about;

- activities of contractors
- results of contractor monitoring
- accidents or dangerous occurrences
- complaints and comments from users
- maintenance records

The review should take place annually, if legal standards or guidelines change, or if a serious problem arises.

Miscellaneous

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 do **not** apply to Bunsen burners in educational establishments. Gas Safe registration is not necessary for work in connection with Bunsen burners. Science teachers and technicians, however, must be competent before carrying out any work. If it is necessary to clear blocked gas tap outlets, care must be taken. Only competent teachers and technicians should undertake this task and they must strictly adhere to the advice provided by the CLEAPSS School Science Service. Current advice is given in CLEAPSS Bulletins and in the CLEAPSS handbook.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the safe use of gas appliances can be obtained from the following sources.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on www.hse.gov.uk/gas

(free leaflet available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/gasindex.htm>)

To check a gas installer, visit - <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/find-an-engineer/>

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN SELECTING AND PURCHASING GAS EQUIPMENT

Council employees or contractors who purchase gas equipment for use in a council workplace or accommodation must consider the following factors when deciding which equipment to buy. Some of these factors are checked by the Gas Safe registered installer who must fit the equipment. The purpose of this document is to help anticipate problems in order to reduce wasted time and cost of badly selected equipment.

1. The equipment

The equipment should be new, from a reputable supplier, and bear a CE mark.

If the equipment is used or reconditioned, a certificate of gas safety must be obtained by a GAS SAFE registered gas safety engineer.

The equipment must be suitable for the intended use, and the gas supply available.

2. The environment

There must be an adequate air supply for gas appliances. The GAS SAFE installer will calculate the required volume of air flow for the new equipment.

The appliance must be a sufficient distance from combustible or flammable materials. This will be checked by the competent installer.

It may be necessary to place the appliance in a secure room, to prevent tampering by unauthorised persons.

3. The users

The persons who are to use the equipment must be considered at the selection stage.

If the appliance is to be used by children, the controls must be at a suitable height.

If the appliance is for use by people with disabilities their specific needs must be addressed.

If there is a danger of unauthorised use or tampering, a remote gas tap, accessible only by authorised staff, may be necessary.

The above list is not exhaustive. The GAS SAFE registered gas fitter may identify other issues for consideration. The GSIU Regs may change from time to time, the competent installer will know of these changes.

TEMPORARY HEATING USING FREE STANDING BOTTLED GAS HEATERS (LPG)

All premises managers must be aware of the risks to building users and property when using portable gas heaters. Once a safe location has been identified the heater should not be moved without the authorisation of a competent person.

These control measures were identified in a risk assessment, which looked specifically at the catalyst-type LPG heaters. It is recommended that these are used instead of the normal flame heaters, as there is no flame and they are fitted with automatic cut-off systems that switch the heater off if the oxygen supply gets too low.

1. Only use heaters that conform to the British Standard and carry the 'Kitemark', and are fitted with a suitable fire guard.
2. Ensure that the appliance is serviced regularly by a competent gas engineer (must be Gas Safe registered to work on LPG systems). Obtain certificates of the most recent safety check; it should be at least in the last year.
3. Ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using the appliance. The instructions with the heater should say how much is needed. As an extra precaution, a daily check should be made to ensure windows are not being closed by room users.
4. Only use the heater in supervised rooms. Do not leave unsupervised, even if it is not switched on. Heaters should not be used in laboratories, art rooms or workshops where flammable materials are used or stored.
5. Keep 1 metre area clear of any combustible materials in all directions around the heater and create a physical barrier around the heater, to keep it out of reach and prevent accidental damage.
6. Heaters must be located so that means of escape is not affected in the event of a fire and they must not be exposed to draughts.
7. Never move a heater when it is in use.
8. Provide basic advice to staff on first aid for minor burns (run under cold water), in case many pupils or staff come into contact with hot parts of the heater.
9. Ensure that only trained persons switch on or off, change cylinder, or operate regulator.
10. Follow manufacturer's instructions fully, and in particular;
 - Change the cylinder in the open air. If this is not possible, open windows and doors to increase ventilation. Never change a cylinder on a stairway or other escape route.
 - Extinguish all sources of ignition, including cigarettes and pilot lights and turn off other heaters and electrical appliances if it has to be done indoors.
 - Check that the valve on the empty cylinder is closed before disconnecting from the heater.

- Do not turn on the valve of the new cylinder until the cylinder is securely connected to the heater.
- Exercise particular care with small heaters designed for use when camping.
- Ensure that the pierceable cartridge is empty before removing. Check that the valve on the heater is closed; the sealing washer is in good condition and correctly located before fitting a new cartridge.
- Store spare cylinders outside whenever possible. Never store them in basements, near drains, under stairs or in cupboards containing electric meters or equipment. Spare cylinders must be stored upright.
- Test for leaks by applying soapy water to all joints and connections (**never use a lighted match or any other flame for testing for leaks**).

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The most effective way to extinguish gas that is on fire is by turning off the supply. If the supply cannot be turned off easily and safely, inexperienced persons should NOT attempt to extinguish a gas fire. The area should be evacuated and fire fighting left to the fire brigade. **The fire brigade must be informed that gas cylinders are involved.** Extinguishing the flame without turning off the supply leaves a risk of explosion. Gas cylinders may explode when exposed to heat even if they are not in contact with the fire.

Fire risk assessments must be amended to take into account the presence of gas fires and gas cylinders.

As part of the safe system of work there should be written emergency procedures. These should include procedures covering the following situations.

Leakage without fire.

- If safe to do so, turn off the main valve on the cylinder.
- Extinguish all sources of ignition but do NOT operate electrical switches in the vicinity of the leak, either on or off.
- Ventilate the area.
- Evacuate the building
- Once the room has been adequately ventilated and the leak stopped, remove the cylinder to a well ventilated place in the open air, away from ignition sources and drains. Prevent unauthorised approach and contact the cylinder supplier.
- If the leak persists call the fire brigade informing them that LPG is involved.

Leakage with fire

- Sound the fire alarm.
- Evacuate the building (except for persons involved in emergency procedures).

- Call the fire brigade informing them that LPG is involved.
- If safe to do so extinguish the flame by turning off the main valve on the cylinder.
- If gas continues to escape proceed as in a) above.
- If the flame cannot be extinguished evacuate **ALL** persons from the building and leave fire fighting to the fire brigade.

Fire in the vicinity of an LPG heater or cylinder.

- Sound the alarm and initiate the establishment's fire and emergency procedures. Ensure that the building is evacuated and that the fire brigade is called and informed of the presence of LPG cylinders.
- If safe to do so, remove the appliance/cylinder to a well ventilated place in the open air, away from ignition sources.