

Energy

BULLETIN

Office of **ENERGY WA**

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The New Gas Standards Regulations

The *Gas Standards Regulations 1983* will shortly be replaced by a new set of regulations, the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumers' Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*.

The need to change the existing regulations and the appropriateness of them to meet the needs of industry were canvassed in recent Energy Bulletins and have been the subject of industry seminars throughout the State.

There are many new features of the proposed *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumers' Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*, including:

- they are written in plain English;
- they make use of industry codes such as AG601;
- they are clearly indexed and have clear titles to the various Parts, Divisions and Schedules; and
- they are specifically relevant to gasfitting and consumers' gas installations.

The new format and the adoption of industry's views received in response to our extensive consultation with stakeholders, furthers the Office of Energy's objective of establishing effective regulation.

Drafting of these new regulations is now complete. Subject to formal approval, they will be gazetted by April 1999 and will come into effect 28 days later.

The Office of Energy will be conducting a comprehensive educational/awareness program on the new Regulations, to inform gas industry personnel of the many implications for their industry.

Details of the seminars will be notified to industry in public announcements and by direct mail.

KEVAN MCGILL
A/DIRECTOR OF ENERGY SAFETY

Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumers' Gas Installations) Regulations 1999

The lead article in this Energy Bulletin introduced the new *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumers' Gas Installations) Regulations 1999* to replace the existing *Gas Standards Regulations 1983*.

Summary of the Regulations

The Regulations take careful account of industry's requests, reinforced throughout the consultative process, for:

- more clarity and certainty;
- better defined roles and responsibilities for gas fitters, gas suppliers and consumers;
- classes of gasfitting which are more relevant to the activities of industry operatives (gas fitters);
- more flexibility in relation to Type B gas appliance approvals processes;
- more responsible arrangements for the maintenance of Type B gas installations; and
- flexibility for the Director in certain requirements in response to the needs of industry.

The new regulations reflect industry's requests to call up industry standards, in particular AG601, to provide a more uniform technical basis for installations and training of gas fitters.

Introductory Presentations

Senior staff of the Technical & Safety Division of the Office of Energy will shortly commence a series of industry presentations throughout the State to introduce the new Regulations. The presentations will be structured to inform gas fitters and major industry representatives of the changes that will affect their business and work.

Industry operatives are urged to attend one of these seminars so they can be better equipped for the impending regulatory changes.

Details of the seminars will be notified to industry in public announcements and by direct mail.

The Y2K Problem (Millennium Bug)

During the past few years, there has been a lot of publicity about the Y2K problem or Millennium Bug.

The Y2K problem affects all organisations throughout the world. It will not disappear. And there are no magical cures.

There is a lot of information available on how to deal with the Y2K problem. Standards Australia has published a detailed, non-technical and easy to understand handbook to provide unbiased advice. Information in the handbook, "Managing Year 2000 Conformity – A Code of Practice for Small and Medium Enterprises" (HB120-1998), includes:

- understanding the problem
- the impact on businesses
- ways of fixing dates and date logic
- solution strategy, testing and general implementation plans.

Computer / Programmable Electronic Systems

Industry operatives need to be aware of the potential impact that the Y2K problem may have on the electronic parts of systems and appliances. This is particularly important where safety-related functions may be compromised. It is the contractor's responsibility to identify such issues with clients so that appropriate and timely action may be taken.

Are you a supplier of materials, services and/or essential services to the Office of Energy?

Businesses that supply materials or services to the Office of Energy will be required to demonstrate to the Office of Energy how their organisation has addressed the Y2K problem, both internally and within their own supplier networks. This will be necessary to ensure the continuance of supply and service arrangements with the Office of Energy (and other Government departments)

For more information, please telephone our Y2K Coordinator on 08 9422 5235.

Victorian Gas Crisis

Most readers will be aware of the recent gas supply crisis in Victoria. Following a series of major explosions and fires at the Longford plant in Victoria, gas supply ceased at about 12.35 PM on 25 September 1998. The tragedy caused the death of two workers at the plant.

The loss of supply raised a number of safety issues for the Office of Gas Safety in Victoria, highlighting the need to deal with:

- rapid load shedding to establish sustainable balance between use and the available supply from other sources;
- effective legislation to control use;
- compliance with prohibitions on use;
- fuel switching;
- gas quality on re-supply;
- reliability on re-supply;
- relight program; and
- incidents during relight.

Kim Wong, Senior Gas Engineer from the Office of Energy WA, assisted the Office of Gas Safety in the restoration phase of the gas re-supply and implementation and monitoring of the relight program management plan. This work included public advertising, producing household brochures and providing safety rulings.

This crisis highlighted a number of issues for all jurisdictions, including Western Australia. The issues include:

- emergency planning involving all relevant parties (production, transmission, distribution);
- supply reliability in contingency circumstances;
- regular servicing, testing and auditing of the emergency plans;
- the determination and inclusion of acceptable gas quality variations that systems can tolerate; and
- prior identification in emergency plans of priority essential users and load shedding capabilities.

The Office of Energy will be working with industry and the State Emergency Management Advisory Committee to address these issues.

Code of Practice - Selling Electrical Installation Products to the Public

Readers may recall the announcement of the introduction of the Code of Practice for the Sale of Electrical Installation Products to the Public, in an article in Energy Bulletin No 12.

The Code of Practice, which was developed by the Office of Energy in partnership with the Retail Traders Association of WA and the Hardware Association of WA, has been well accepted as a meaningful guide to sellers of electrical installation products, such as switches and power points to the public. The illegality and danger of unlicensed people installing these types of items is highlighted in the Code of Practice.

We are nevertheless concerned about the sale of short lengths of pre-cut pre-packaged TPS cable to unlicensed people. We realise that many items such as switches and power points may well be supplied by unlicensed persons to licensed electrical contractors for subsequent installation. But this may not be valid for pre-cut pre-packaged TPS cable.

We would therefore be interested to know whether any licensed electrical contractors or licensed electrical workers have had occasion to either buy short lengths of pre-cut pre-packaged TPS cable, or have had it supplied to them for installation.

This information may provide some indication of the proportion of this type of material which is bought by unlicensed persons and installed legally.

If you are a licensed electrical contractor or worker and have either bought pre-cut, pre-packaged TPS cable, or have been supplied with it by a customer for subsequent installation, then we would like to know about it. You can let us know, confidentially if you wish, by either phoning Ian George at the Office of Energy on 9422 5209, or by writing to him at 20 Southport Street Leederville, or by email to igeorge@energy.wa.gov.au.

The Regulatory Services Branch

A restructure of the Regulatory Services Branch was undertaken recently. The changes were considered necessary to ensure that the Branch continues to provide the best possible service to its customers.

Services provided by the Regulatory Services Branch include:

- administering the licensing of gas and electrical operatives, including electrical contractor and in-house licensing and providing a point of contact to answer licensing enquiries;
- supporting the Electrical Licensing Board in licence approval and disciplinary matters;
- supplying technical and promotional information to industry; and
- providing a point of sale for technical publications.

Staff of the Regulatory Services Branch now are:

Manager Regulatory Services

Peter Tuck

Policy and Administration Officer

Sean Fletcher

Licensing Coordinator

Judy Dinnison

Communications Officer (Technical)

(Position vacant)

Customer Service Officers

Michelle Miller

Gayle Cowan

Receptionist/Clerk Typist

Adrienne Saunders

The Branch welcomes new staff members Judy Dinnison, Gayle Cowan and Adrienne Saunders.



Staff of the Regulatory Services Branch are (from left to right) Peter Tuck, Sean Fletcher, Judy Dinnison, Michelle Miller, Gayle Cowan and Adrienne Saunders

Alternative formats of the Energy Bulletin may be available to meet the needs of people with disabilities

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