



Office of **Energy**

Office of **ENERGY WA**

Gas FOCUS

Safety of Consumer's Gas Installations (From a LPG Suppliers Perspective)

West Australians can be connected to a gas supply in any area of the State whether it be a reticulated system through a meter or a gas supply fed from cylinders. Generally speaking, the areas of high demographics have a reticulated natural gas system operated presently by a government owned utility. Gas fitters tend to "toe the line" as inspection practices appear to be more stringent in areas of reticulated gas.

In the more sparsely populated areas, a flourishing LPG industry exists with three major companies sharing that business. A minority of gas fitters in these remote areas are of the opinion that the usual rules do not apply and favour shoddy work practices. The catchcry being, "we will never see an inspector out here."

"Have we got news for you". Competition has always been robust between these LPG suppliers with safety being the industry's primary concern. Gone are the days where, if the supply of cylinders were refused over a safety or regulatory issue, another gas supplier would deliver.

Gas suppliers, and this includes agents and dealers, risk a fine of up to \$5000 for the supply of LPG to an unsafe gas installation. If gas fitters feel they have immunity because of the competition, they are wrong. A duly completed Notice of Compliance (NOC) is required to be submitted before the gas supplier can supply gas.

Some gas fitters plead their ignorance when the gas supplier is not known. This may be a fair comment in some eastern states where

there may be as many as five gas suppliers. In WA, where the gas supplier is unknown, the NOC should be sent to the regulatory authority, the Office of Energy. In the majority of cases of "unknown gas supplier", the gas fitter has failed to complete a NOC or failed to leave the Customer Copy of the NOC with the client or on site with the builder.

Failure to comply with either of the above practices usually gets the consumer and builder offside as the gas supplier cannot proceed with the first fill. A gas fitter commits an offence and could be prosecuted. Repeat offenders may have their permits cancelled.

De-regulation and down sizing is happening on a national basis across all industries. The gas industry is no exception. The inspection regime in place relies on the gas fitter to ensure compliance. Failure to comply will incur the wrath of the inspector and gas supplier, with dire consequences.

The above article was provided by one of the LPG supply companies.

Note: Gas Suppliers in WA are required to comply with an agreed inspection plan as approved by the Director of Energy Safety. This inspection

plan ensures that audit inspections are carried out to identify unsafe gas appliances/installations or the failure of gas fitters to comply with regulations.

Gas Seminars in 1999

Staff of the Office of Energy will be conducting Gas Industry Presentations in the metropolitan area and major regional centres, during 1999.

Topics for discussion will include:

- Gas Standards Regulations
- AGA Gas Installations Code AG 601
- Inspection Issues
- Licensing Matters

Details of the Presentations will be announced in the next Energy Bulletin.

Automotive Gas Conversions and Other Mobile Installations

Gas fitters carrying out mobile LP gasfitting work are to be commended for the high standards achieved when completing and submitting Notices of Compliance to the Office of Energy. In the main, the new forms prescribed by the Director of Energy Safety are now being used. More importantly, most gas fitters carrying out mobile LPG work are now providing registration and/or vehicle/vessel identification numbers to allow identification of the installation.

However, there are a few gas fitters who continue to submit the yellow Preliminary Notice for mobile LPG (stand alone cylinder)

installations. Preliminary Notices are not required to be submitted for **any** LPG installations.

It may therefore be appropriate for gas fitters who only carry out LP gasfitting work to discard the yellow Preliminary Notice immediately upon receipt of each new book of notices. This will avoid confusion and ensure that the Compliance Notice (blue copy) becomes the original document and is correctly signed. The Preliminary and Compliance Notices are necessarily produced in the combined format to allow the one set of notices for all types of gasfitting work.

PROSECUTIONS FOR BREACHES OF THE GAS STANDARDS ACT (1972) AND GAS STANDARDS REGULATIONS (1983) 1 July 1998 to 31 October 1998

| <i>Breach</i> | <i>Name (and Suburb/Town of Residence at Time of Offence)</i> | <i>Licence No.</i> | <i>Fine \$</i> | <i>Costs \$</i> |
|---|---|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Carried out gasfitting work without certificate of competency, permit or authorisation Section 13A GSA</i> | <i>R Cooper (Esperance)</i> | <i>NLH</i> | <i>500.00</i> | <i>425.00</i> |
| | <i>R Riordan (Beechboro)</i> | <i>GF 008602</i> | <i>100.00</i> | <i>170.00</i> |
| | <i>T Johnston (Craigie)</i> | <i>GF 007926</i> | <i>400.00</i> | <i>364.00</i> |
| <i>Failed to install a fitting line to the depth prescribed Regulation 19(1) GSR</i> | <i>D Watt (Sorrento)</i> | <i>GF 005233</i> | <i>375.00</i> | <i>525.00</i> |
| <i>Represented himself as being an authorised gasfitter Regulation 23 GSR</i> | <i>R Riordan (Beechboro)</i> | <i>GF 008602</i> | <i>100.00</i> | <i>170.00</i> |
| <i>Failed to pressure test an installation to ensure the system was gas-tight Regulation 26(1)(a) GSR</i> | <i>D Watt (Sorrento)</i> | <i>GF 005233</i> | <i>375.00</i> | <i>525.00</i> |
| <i>Unauthorised interference with service apparatus Regulation 35 GSR</i> | <i>D Panton (Kiara)</i> | <i>GF 001641</i> | <i>500.00</i> | <i>157.00*</i> |
| | <i>D Panton (Kiara)</i> | <i>GF 001641</i> | <i>500.00</i> | <i>157.00*</i> |

NLH No Licence Held

* Two Charges