



gas | focus

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Gas Licensing Committee

During 1999, the Director of Energy Safety established the Gas Licensing Committee (GLC) (see Energy Bulletin No. 19 – December 2000) to assist him in dealing with gas fitter licensing matters.

The GLC is a committee of three senior Office of Energy officers who have been provided with delegated statutory powers. The members of the GLC are Manager Regulatory Services (Chairman), Principal Engineer Gas Installations & Appliances and the Chief Gas Inspector.

The functions of the GLC include:

- reviewing and assessing applications for gasfitting permits and authorisations;
- interviewing gas fitters who have been identified by the Gas Inspection Branch as having breached safety standards and/or the regulations, to decide whether the person should face an Inquiry;
- providing information to the Technical Services Branch to assist with future gasfitting policy and regulation development; and
- providing information to the Gas Inspection Branch to assist in setting inspection schedules and identifying problem areas in industry.

During the past six months, 12 gas fitters have been invited to the GLC to discuss their performance prior to a recommendation being made to the Director of Energy Safety regarding action to be taken. Suspension or cancellation of their licence would prohibit the offender from performing gasfitting work in Western Australia.

A number of cases involved gas fitters who had failed to submit a Notice of Completion for gas installing work. This is a serious breach of legislation. Such an offence is an indication that a gas fitter may be attempting to avoid the inspection process. The gas fitter may be required to appear before the GLC and later face an Inquiry. The breach may also result in the gas fitter being prosecuted.

The GLC views instances of a gas fitter receiving a Notice of Defects for substandard work as serious offences. The inspector is not a safety net for non-

compliance by gas workers. If a Notice of Defects is issued, the recipient may be liable for prosecution. Also, the GLC will assess whether the person should face an Inquiry.

Recently, two formal Inquiries were held with the approval of the Director of Energy Safety, on the advice of the GLC. These Inquiries were conducted by the Deputy Director Energy Safety, under a delegation by the Director:

1. Mr Allan Templeman (GF 000759) connected a gasfitting line to the liquid drainage outlet of an LPG tank. This configuration could have allowed liquid LPG to be introduced into the gasfitting line of the gas appliance, creating a potentially dangerous situation within the appliance. Mr Templeman also failed to give a Notice of Rectification to the Inspector within seven days of receipt of a Notice of Defects.

Due to the serious nature of this breach, Mr Templeman's Certificate of Competence was cancelled, pending the outcome of the inquiry.

At the conclusion of the inquiry, Mr Templeman was found to have breached regulations 18(2)(a) and (b) and 30(1)(b) of the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*, as the work was not carried out in a safe manner or to a trade finish. The cancellation of his Certificate of Competence was confirmed.

2. Mr Anthony Canal (GF 002242), after capping off the gas supply pipe, removed a gas meter and associated equipment (service apparatus) at an installation without authorisation from the gas supplier. Mr Canal then installed the gas meter and associated equipment (service apparatus) at his own home (AlintaGas had previously disconnected his meter).

At the conclusion of the inquiry, Mr Canal was found to have breached regulation 37(1) of the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*, as he interfered with service apparatus. Mr Canal's Certificate of Competence was suspended for three months.

Amendments to the Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999

The *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999* were amended to take effect from 19 December 2000.

There is a six-month transition period for changes to Schedules 6 and 7. During this period, the previous requirements will also be acceptable. The amendments were necessary:

- to incorporate recommendations of the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation (following the Committee's review of the 1999 regulations);
- to update references in the regulations to the latest editions of national technical standards; and
- to make the regulations easier to follow.

The amendments are summarised as follows:

- It is made clear the design of a gas appliance is not the responsibility of the installing gas fitter. The gas

fitter is required to obtain a copy of the approval of an appliance or ensure that it is correctly badged before it is installed.

- The form of notification of completed gasfitting work may be varied with the approval of the Director.
- The approval process for industrial gas appliances is clarified. The changes incorporate a requirement for gas fitters to seek approval before modifying an existing Type B gas appliance.
- A gas fitter is required to report any existing defects or unsafe conditions in a gas installation.
- AS 5601/AG 601 – 2000 Gas Installations is adopted, replacing an older code. Several separate regulatory requirements that are now covered in the code are removed.
- AS 3814/AG 501 – 2000 Industrial and commercial gas-fired appliances is adopted, replacing an older code.

Copies of the amendments are available from State Law Publisher. Gas fitters should make sure they obtain a copy of the amendments and update their regulations.

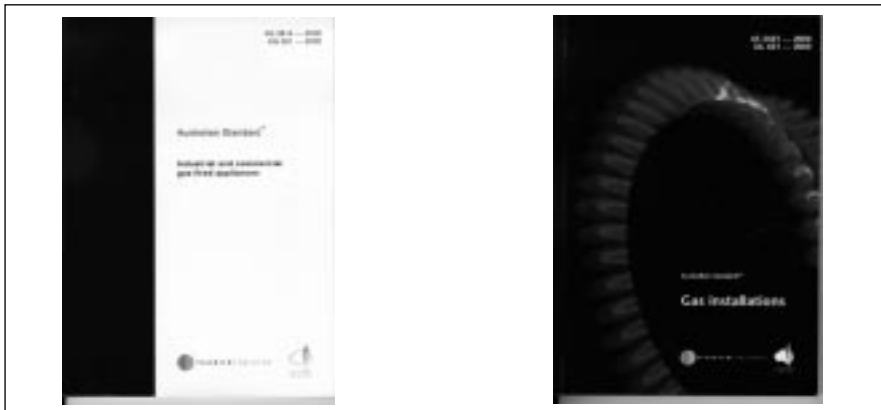
Interpretation of Regulations 35, 35A and 35B

The Office of Energy has received enquiries in relation to the interpretation of amendments to Regulation 35 of the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999* (as published in the Government Gazette on 19 December 2000).

The inclusion of amendment Regulations 35A and 35B is to clarify the requirements for a gas supplier who commences gas supply to Type A or Type B gas appliance installations. The regulations also explain the requirements for a Type B appliance on a new consumer's gas installation site and on an existing site.

The commissioning gas fitter is to make an application (with the endorsement of a Type B Gas Appliance Inspector) to the gas supplier for the provision of gas for commissioning purposes. The regulations allow the gas supplier to impose other requirements after the gas installation is commissioned and certified by the inspector, before it supplies gas permanently to the installation.

Further information is available in the Office of Energy's publication "Guidelines for Approval of Industrial Gas Appliances (Type B Appliances) in Western Australia". The publication is available free of charge from the Office of Energy's website or at a cost of \$5.00 from the Office of Energy's Licensing Office.



Defects to be Reported

The changes to the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999* (19 December 2000) include a requirement for gas fitters to report all defects that they become aware of during the course of carrying out gasfitting work in a particular gas installation.

Regulation 42A states:

- (1) If a gas fitter, in the course of work as a gas fitter, becomes aware of a defect that the gas fitter considers renders the gas installation, or part of it, unsafe to

use, the gas fitter must immediately notify the following of the existence and nature of defect —

- (a) the consumer for whom the gasfitting work was done;
 - (b) the gas supplier or (if the gas installation is a mobile engine, is on or in a caravan or marine craft or the relevant gas supplier is not identifiable) the Director.
- (2) Subregulation (1) does not apply —
 - (a) to a gas fitter who believes, on reasonable grounds, that the

defect has already been notified in accordance with subregulation (1); or

- (b) to a supervised gas fitter who notifies the defect to the supervising gas fitter.

Gas fitters are reminded of their obligation to be alert to unsafe or potentially unsafe parts of gas installations and, if discovered, to report those situations in accordance with the above Regulation 42A of the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*.

A Hot Spot

In January 2001, a plumber was called to a house to undertake the replacement of a toilet suite. When the work was finished, the owner of the house asked the plumber if he could install another valve in the reticulation system connected to the water service.

To find the water service, the plumber dug a hole in a line between the water meter and the tap fitting at the front of the house. He found the 20mm copper service down about 500mm. He then enlarged the hole so he could cut in and weld a tee section. This had been a routine type of job up to this stage.

When the water was turned back on, the plumber noticed a tiny leak on the existing copper service, some 300mm from the new tee. He turned the water service off and opened the hole up further so he could carry out the additional repairs to the copper service. After repairing the leak, the plumber placed his oxy torch away from the pipe but directed into the bottom of the hole, whilst he inspected the pipe more closely. All of a sudden, there was a whoosh and the hole erupted in fire. The plumber jumped from the hole as the flames leapt up behind him.

The owner of the house came rushing out of the house and the plumber yelled for him to phone the fire brigade and AlintaGas. Fortunately the plumber only received superficial burns and a somewhat shortened haircut but still required an afternoon stay in hospital for treatment.

After the event, it was discovered that the gas service had been laid in a common trench some 100mm under the water service.

We all need to be constantly aware of the likelihood of other services being

in the near vicinity of work being carried out, particularly in front yards. In this case, the plumber's quick thinking probably prevented any more severe damage. That may not always be the case!

STOP PRESS Since writing this article, there has been another similar incident. Fortunately, the gas fitter was not injured.

Recording of Service Information

Regulation 23 of the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999* requires gas fitters to apply a badge or label to gas installations they service. Generally this is not a problem; a sticky label can easily be applied to Type A appliances, hot water units, cookers, space heaters etc. The label only has to indicate the date the appliance was serviced and the gas fitter's registration number. Labels can be a simple plain label obtained from a newsagent or a more elaborate one with company name and telephone number.

However, there have been problems with recording of service information on industrial sites. Where do you apply a sticky label to a brick kiln or complex industrial appliance? Also, owner/operators have certain obligations under the regulations; Regulation 36 requires that certain equipment, pressure-raising devices, over-pressure protection devices etc must be serviced within two years of installation and then every two years thereafter. A record must be maintained by the owner/operator.

The Office of Energy has developed two new publications to assist industry in meeting the above requirements:

Gasfitting Record Book – to replace existing record books and used by authorisation holders only.

Gasfitting authorisation holders can only use the Gasfitting Record Book. New books are being sent to all currently registered authorisation holders.

Gas Service Logbook – to record service work carried out on gas appliances (a statutory requirement).

It is a statutory requirement for gas fitters to record service work carried out on a consumer's gas installation. The service information is displayed in the form of a badge or label

attached to the installation.

The Gas Service Logbook has been provided by the Director of Energy Safety as an alternative means to the use of badges and labels.

Owner/operators or site managers must apply to the Director of Energy Safety for a Gas Service Logbook, to assist them in complying with their statutory requirements under the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*. Gas fitters carrying out any service work on a site that maintains a Gas Service Logbook should enter the service information into the logbook. This will help the owner/operator to maintain a comprehensive record of the servicing of their gas installations.

Fire Follows Gas Fitter Replacing Water Heater

A gas fitter was contracted to replace an external storage water heater at a house. The replacement water heater was similar to the redundant unit but the gas fitter had to slightly "spring" the copper pipe to reconnect the replacement heater. The gas fitter used the same connections, a kinco nut and a nipple screwed into the thermostat housing. The water heater was relit and the job was signed off.

Several days later a fire was reported at the same house. Upon investigation, it was found that the cause of this fire was the failure of the gas connection at the new water heater.

The "sprung" copper pipe had been under stress and the kinco connection let go, spilling gas into the water heater. The pilot flame ignited this ensuing rush of gas. The owner of the house was home at the time and was alerted to the fire by the noise of the rush of gas igniting. The owner quickly extinguished the fire. The water heater was damaged beyond repair.

The gas fitter's misfortunes continued. He had not submitted a Notice of Completion for this work and was caught out. This resulted in disciplinary action to the gas fitter for breaches of the regulations.

There are two valuable rules to be learnt from this gas fitter's woes:

- Don't use kinco connections.
- Always submit a Notice of Completion for gasfitting work.

Besides being valuable rules, failure to follow them is also a breach of the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*.



**PROSECUTIONS FOR BREACHES OF THE GAS STANDARDS ACT 1972
AND GAS STANDARDS (GASFITTING AND CONSUMER GAS
INSTALLATIONS) REGULATIONS 1999
1 November 2000 to 28 February 2001**

| <i>Breach</i> | <i>Name (and suburb of residence at time of offence)</i> | <i>Licence No.</i> | <i>Fine (\$)</i> | <i>Costs (\$)</i> |
|---|--|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Carried out gasfitting work without a certificate of competency, permit or authorisation Section 13A(2) GSA</i> | <i>A Agasaleh (Kenwick)</i> | <i>NLH</i> | <i>400.00</i> | <i>448.85</i> |
| | <i>M Beck (Jarrahdale)</i> | <i>NLH</i> | <i>300.00</i> | <i>332.70</i> |
| <i>Failed to give Notice of Completion to gas supplier within 48 hours Regulation 28(3)(b) GSR</i> | <i>P Morton (Warnbro)</i> | <i>GF 004973</i> | <i>350.00</i> | <i>95.90</i> |
| <i>Failed to rectify Notice of Defect within 7 days Regulation 30 GSR</i> | <i>D Harrison (Roleystone)</i> | <i>GF 000625</i> | <i>300.00</i> | <i>86.54</i> |
| <i>Failed to ensure consumer piping had flexibility to prevent excessive loading at joints Regulation 32(1)(b) GSR</i> | <i>P Morton (Warnbro)</i> | <i>GF 004973</i> | <i>500.00</i> | <i>95.90</i> |
| <i>Failed to ensure flue terminal located no less than 500 mm laterally from return wall Regulation 32(1)(b) GSR</i> | <i>P Morton (Warnbro)</i> | <i>GF 004973</i> | <i>1 000.00</i> | <i>95.90</i> |
| <i>Laid consumer piping on the ground Regulation 32(1)(b) GSR</i> | <i>D Harrison (Roleystone)</i> | <i>GF 000625</i> | <i>300.00</i> | <i>86.54</i> |
| <i>Installed a quick connect device socket outside less than 300 mm above the ground Regulation 32(1)(b) GSR</i> | <i>D Harrison (Roleystone)</i> | <i>GF 000625</i> | <i>300.00</i> | <i>86.54</i> |
| <i>Failed to install a quick connect device so as to avoid entry of water, dust or other debris Regulation 32(1)(b) GSR</i> | <i>D Harrison (Roleystone)</i> | <i>GF 000625</i> | <i>300.00</i> | <i>86.54</i> |
| <i>Failed to ensure that there was a permanent ventilation opening near the bottom of the room Regulation 32 (2) GSR</i> | <i>D Harrison (Roleystone)</i> | <i>GF 000625</i> | <i>300.00</i> | <i>86.54</i> |
| <i>Interfered with gas service apparatus without authorisation Regulation 37 GSR</i> | <i>R Bailey (Joondanna)</i> | <i>GF 005779</i> | <i>250.00</i> | <i>121.85</i> |
| | <i>A Agasaleh (Kenwick)</i> | <i>NLH</i> | <i>400.00</i> | <i>448.85</i> |
| <i>Failed to report an incident involving the discharge of gas that was likely to cause injury or damage Regulation 42(1) GSR</i> | <i>R Bailey (Joondanna)</i> | <i>GF 005779</i> | <i>250.00</i> | <i>121.85</i> |

GSA Gas Standards Act 1972

GSR Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999

NLH No Licence Held