



Wilkins Safety Group

Monday, 8th September 2014

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Welcome to our latest Update E-Newsletter

As ever, please feel free to share this with friends and colleagues. You will also find PDF versions of all our other newsletters on our website: www.wilkinssafety.co.uk with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.



This week we are looking at Gas Safety.

We thought we would look at gas safety this week as next week is National Gas Safety Week 2014. Of course this is a topic that doesn't just apply at work. Twenty one million households in United Kingdom, Isle of Man and Guernsey use gas. But, as the two recent HSE cases show, even today people's lives are put at risk by unsafe gas appliances or installations.

This year, Gas Safety Week will take place 15th-21st September.

This week's 2 recent HSE cases also look at Gas safety, or the lack of it:

- **Mark Sampson, 42, from Bridgwater**, was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on 3rd Sept 2014 for a safety breach following an investigation into his actions. **He is a registered gas engineer with the Gas Safe Register.**
- **Giles Boardman**, the landlord of a property in Plymouth, **risked the lives of a young mother and her child**, by providing a dangerous gas oven installed in the house a court has heard

We hope you learn from the mistakes of others that are highlighted in our weekly newsletters and, as a result, do not have similar accidents at your workplace.

As ever, if you have a subject that you would like us to cover one week, please contact us by phone [01458 253682](tel:01458253682)
Email info@wilkinssafety.co.uk or via our [Facebook page](#) or by [Twitter](#)

Gas Safety

Gas Safety Week is an annual safety week to raise awareness of gas safety and the importance of taking care of your gas appliances. It is co-ordinated by Gas Safe Register with support from the gas industry including retailers, manufacturers, consumer bodies and the public.

Twenty one million households in United Kingdom, Isle of Man and Guernsey use gas for heating, hot water and cooking, yet we take it for granted that our boilers, cookers and gas fires are safe. Badly fitted and poorly serviced gas appliances can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.



Did you know?

- Every year thousands of people across the UK are diagnosed with carbon monoxide poisoning. It is a highly poisonous gas. You can't see it, taste it or smell it, but it can kill quickly with no warning.
- Gas Safe Register estimates that there are around 7,500 illegal gas fitters operating across the UK and up to 250,000 illegal gas jobs may be carried out each year (Gas Safe Register Research 2009).
- Although there is awareness that gas appliances need to be safety checked annually, 43% of Britons don't do it, and 10% have gas appliances which have never been checked (Gas Safety Week Research 2011).

If gas appliances, such as ovens, cookers and boilers, are not properly installed and maintained, there is a danger of fire, explosion, gas leaks and carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Employer's duties

Employers need to comply with the relevant regulations to help ensure worker and public safety. You can do this by following our advice on maintaining and servicing gas appliances, by using a Gas Safe registered engineer or a competent person.

Case study one

The importance of being Gas Safe registered

A plumber who was not Gas Safe registered, and had previously been served with a prohibition notice by HSE, persisted in carrying out illegal gas work in a shop. He was caught on CCTV doing so, was prosecuted for two breaches of health and safety law and was sentenced to two concurrent terms of six months in prison.

How cases like this can be avoided?

Working with gas appliances is difficult, specialised and potentially very dangerous. Only competent engineers should attempt it. If unregistered workers try to bypass the law, they are not only putting themselves at risk of prosecution and a large fine or even imprisonment, they are also putting their customers' lives at risk.

Who is competent to work on gas fittings?

Domestic properties, schools etc.

In domestic properties and workplaces such as shops, restaurants, schools and hospitals, this must be carried out by someone on the Gas Safe Register who is qualified to work on gas appliances.

It is illegal for an unregistered person to carry out work on any domestic gas appliance. You can check this by contacting the [Gas Safe Register](#) online or by calling them on **0800 408 5500**.

All those who are registered carry a Gas Safe ID card, which shows the type of work they are qualified to do and whether their qualifications are up to date.

Factories, mines etc.

In factories, mines, quarries, agricultural premises, construction site huts and sewage works, work on gas fittings must be carried out by a competent person. It is your responsibility to check that they are competent. If the engineer is on the Gas Safe Register, with the qualifications to do the work required, then they will be a competent person.

Work in any parts of these premises used as domestic, residential or sleeping accommodation must be carried out by someone on the Gas Safe Register.

What do I have to do?

The basics

- Use a competent engineer to install, maintain or repair your appliances
- Ensure that your gas pipework, appliances and flues are regularly maintained
- Check that all rooms with gas appliances have adequate ventilation – don't block air inlets to prevent draughts, and don't obstruct flues and chimneys

Gas

- If you suspect a leak, turn off the supply and immediately call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 for natural gas. For liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), call your LPG supplier
- If in doubt, evacuate the building and inform the police as well as the National Gas Emergency Service or your gas supplier
- Do not turn a gas supply back on until a leak has been dealt with by a competent person



Appliances and pipework

- Use a competent engineer to install, maintain or repair your appliances
- Ensure that your gas pipework, appliances and flues are regularly maintained
- Don't use any appliance you know or suspect is unsafe
- Check that the room has adequate ventilation – don't block air inlets to prevent draughts and don't obstruct flues and chimneys

Industrial and commercial plant

Explosions can be caused by the ignition of un-burnt gas.

- Consider the need for explosion relief and/or flame-failure protection as necessary
- Make sure that the gas supply is interlocked with the ventilation of the appliance
- The equipment should be designed, operated and maintained to make sure dangerous levels of carbon monoxide (CO) are not produced. It should not be used in poorly ventilated spaces
- There should be enough ventilation to remove combustion products
- Make sure the operators are fully trained – use a safe procedure for purging, lighting up and shutting down the plant

Case study two

Maintaining gas systems

Twenty-five pupils and two members of teaching staff were evacuated from a classroom in a primary school when they were overcome by dangerous levels of carbon monoxide.

The investigation found that carbon monoxide was being produced by an inadequately maintained boiler and was leaking into the classroom above. The employer was fined a total of £10 000 and ordered to pay costs of £6830.

The employer did have a maintenance system but poor practices had crept in, which they did not identify until after the incident. The consequences could have been much more serious.

How such incidents can be avoided

It's important that employers make sure their gas appliances are maintained in a safe condition by a competent person and in line with manufacturers' instructions and appropriate standards.

The law



Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The general duties of the Act cover work on gas fittings in factories, mines, quarries, agricultural premises, construction site huts, sewage works and gas-fitting testing premises.

In these premises, work on gas fittings must be carried out by a competent person. If any part of these premises are used as domestic, residential or sleeping accommodation, work on gas fittings must be carried out by someone on the Gas Safe Register.

Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

These Regulations cover work on gas fittings, both natural and LPG in other premises, e.g. domestic properties, shops, restaurants, schools and hospitals. In these premises the work on gas fittings must be carried out by someone on the Gas Safe Register.

If you need further information please call us on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or send us an email at info@wilkinssafety.co.uk

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Now to the latest HSE cases:

A Somerset Gas Safe engineer dangerously 'repairs' boiler with 20 pence piece

A Somerset gas engineer has been fined for unsafe gas work after leaving a boiler in an “immediately dangerous” condition when he carried out a service.

Mark Sampson, 42, from Bridgwater, was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at Exeter Magistrates’ Court yesterday (3 Sept) for a safety breach following an investigation into his actions.

Magistrates were told that Mr Sampson is a registered gas engineer with the Gas Safe Register, and that as well as undertaking work independently he also carried out work as an employee of a local company.

The court heard how the company, also on the Gas Safe Register, had instructed Mr Sampson to service the boiler at a property in Brackendown, West Hill, on 19 March 2014 as part of a contract the homeowners had with their energy supplier.

He carried out the service but said he needed to order some parts and left the property, leaving the boiler working. He then contacted his boss to seek approval from the energy supplier to obtain the parts.

The energy supplier was suspicious and instructed another gas engineer from a separate company to visit the home the same day to check if the parts were really needed. The second engineer found some of the parts were not needed and that Mr Sampson had used a 20p piece to “repair” a viewing glass in the boiler which mean it had to be classed as “immediately dangerous”.

Mark Sampson, 42, of Watermans Meadow, Bridgwater, was fined £1,000 ordered to pay £353 costs after pleading guilty to breaching Section 7(a) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.



After the hearing, HSE Inspector Simon Jones said:

“Mark Sampson was Gas Safe registered, which makes it even more shocking that he failed to carry out this work to the correct standard thereby putting the homeowners and any visitors to the property at risk.

“Using a 20p piece in this way is totally unacceptable and meant the boiler was classed as ‘immediately dangerous’ posing a risk of fire and carbon monoxide gas leaking from the boiler.

“There were signs of heat damage inside and outside the boiler before Mark Sampson carried out this ‘repair”, so he should have been alerted to the risk of fire.”

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Plymouth landlord fined over unsafe oven in young mother's home

The landlord of a property in Plymouth risked the lives of a young mother and her child, by providing a dangerous gas oven installed in the house a court has heard.

Giles Boardman was prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at Plymouth Magistrates on 29 August following an investigation.

HSE began inquiries when Plymouth City Council alerted them to the lack of a gas safety certificate for the property in Dickiemoor Lane. The council had asked him to provide a certificate on several occasions.

HSE served an Improvement Notice on Mr Boardman, requiring him to provide a landlords' gas safety check but this had not been done by the notice expiry date.

In April, 2014, an engineer called in by Mr Boardman, found problems with the gas controls that controlled the gas flow for oven and notified HSE. The oven was classified by the Gas Safe registered engineer as Immediately Dangerous, meaning if operated or left connected to the gas supply it could cause an immediate danger to life or property. The oven has now been replaced.

Giles Boardman of Wheatridge, Plympton, Plymouth pleaded guilty to two breaches of gas safety regulations and a breach of the Health and Safety at Work Act. He was fined a total of £4,050 and ordered to pay costs of £513.

HSE Inspector, Simon Jones, speaking after the hearing, said:

“Landlords have a legal duty to carry out gas safety checks which are there to protect their tenants from death or injury.

“In this case, Mr Boardman ignored repeated requests to carry out the checks and as a result, a serious fault with the oven went undetected until discovered by an engineer.”

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If you have any queries on any health and safety matter, please contact Jon Wilkins on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or by email on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk



Your Business is
Safer in Our Hands