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## workplace topics

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## Gas Safety

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### What is it?

The word 'gas' can be used to describe the physical state of many substances. While a number of gases have very specific safety requirements, this guidance relates to the issues associated with the use of gas as a fuel within the workplace.

Many businesses use gas as a source of power or fuel. Most commonly in the workplace it is used for heating the work environment and water supplies, cooking and for processing products.

The gas itself can come from a number of sources including natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and methane, but in general the risks of explosion, poisoning, etc. are similar for all. Gas can be supplied either piped into the premises from the main supply or a storage tank, or in small cylinders used close to the appliance with a flexible hose connection.

### Why is it important?

When gas does not burn properly, or is used in an area without adequate ventilation it produces excess carbon monoxide. If this is inhaled, it binds with the haemoglobin in the blood, starving the body of oxygen and poisoning it. Symptoms can include tiredness, drowsiness, headaches, nausea and chest and stomach pains. In extreme cases carbon monoxide poisoning can kill people within a matter of hours.

You risk carbon monoxide poisoning if your gas appliance has been badly installed or maintained, for example:

- if there is inadequate ventilation in the room where the appliance is located, or
- if the flue or chimney is blocked and cannot vent the system properly
- if the appliance has not been regularly maintained by an engineer
- if your engineer is not CORGI registered and due to their lack of expertise or knowledge installs or maintains the appliance inappropriately.

### What does the law say?

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 place duties on gas users, installers, suppliers and landlords.

Where an employer or self-employed person has a gas appliance installed in the workplace or maintenance work carried out on existing gas appliances or fittings, they must

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make sure that the person carrying out the work is qualified to work on the type of equipment concerned. At present, they prove this by being registered with CORGI (the Council of Registered Gas Installers).

When a gas appliance is installed, it must be located in a position that is easily accessible for use, inspection and maintenance.

Employers, the self-employed or anyone responsible for a business premises, must not allow a gas appliance to be used if they suspect that it may be dangerous.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 2002, place a general duty on landlords to assess the risks and reduce the risks to as low a level as is reasonably practicable. This would apply to the risks associated with the provision of electrical systems and electrical equipment in rented accommodation. However, the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 also place specific duties on landlords to:

- ensure that gas appliances and flues are maintained in a safe condition
- have annual safety checks carried out by an appropriately qualified CORGI engineer
- retain records of these checks for at least two years and issue them to tenants within 28 days of the checks being carried out.

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) cover the reporting of certain incidents involving gas.

In the case of injuries, employers must notify the Enforcing Authority immediately (by telephone using the Incident Reporting Line 0845 300 9923 or via the link on the HSE website). If a person lost consciousness caused by exposure to gas on a business premises, then the incident would be reportable.

The regulations also require gas installers and those carrying out maintenance to report certain dangerous gas appliances to HSE.

### What can be done?

- Have any new gas equipment supplied and fitted by a CORGI registered engineer.
- Have all gas appliances serviced regularly by a CORGI registered engineer, in line with the manufacturers' instructions.  
Since different types of appliances need different knowledge, make sure that the CORGI engineer is qualified to work on your type of equipment. For example, some engineers servicing gas heating systems may not be qualified to service gas catering equipment.
- Always ask to see the engineer's CORGI registration card. The card contains a photograph of the employee, their trading title, their CORGI registration number and the expiry date of the card. The back of the card will give details of the types of gas work that they can carry out. (If necessary, CORGI can provide evidence of registration and confirmation that any certificate of registration is valid).
- Keep the areas around external flue outlets clear of vegetation, etc. to make sure that combustion gases can be effectively removed.
- Ensure there is an adequate airflow around gas appliances.

### In the case of LPG:

- Ensure adequate ventilation is available in the area where the gas is being stored and used, particularly at low level, since LPG is heavier than air.
- Have your LPG appliances maintained by a CORGI engineer qualified to examine such equipment.
- For mobile vehicles, make sure that the gas canister is secured and cannot be tampered with by vandals, etc.
- Try to store as few gas cylinders as possible, arranging for more frequent deliveries where necessary, since storage facilities must meet certain safety standards.
- Make sure that your gas storage facilities meet the standards laid down in the LPG Association Guidance (see end).

For example:

- The storage area is secured against attack from vandals, etc.
- Warning signage is in place to show the hazards associated with LPG
- Cylinders are stored in an upright position? (Unless their labelling indicates that they can be stored otherwise.)
- There is clear access to all cylinders
- Fire fighting facilities are available
- The store and its surroundings are kept free of flammable sources including vegetation
- The storage area is located away from open drains.

NB Your gas supplier will often be able to provide you with guidance on this subject

### Good Practice

- You should keep detailed records of any maintenance work carried out on the gas pipework, appliances and/or flues.
- If the terms of your business premises' lease state that the landlord is responsible for maintaining the gas system, you should ask to see copies of the maintenance records to make sure that they have been carried out properly and that any necessary repairs have been made.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm as a back-up control, (but do not rely on this). Make sure that the alarm meets safety standards BS 7860 or BS EN 50291 and has a Kitemark and make sure it is sited in line with the manufacturer's guidance. Make sure you test the detector regularly.

### Further Information

- [Email your query](#) now
- HSE Gas Safety Adviceline 0800 300 363.
- For information on CORGI registered engineers, contact CORGI, 1 Elmwood, Chineham Business Park, Crockford Lane, Basingstoke, Hants RG24 8WG. Telephone 01256 372300 or see [www.corgi-gas-safety.com](http://www.corgi-gas-safety.com)
- For additional information regarding landlords' duties, you can contact the Small Landlords Association: Telephone 020 7828 2445.

### Free Gas Guidance (HSE Books)

Gas Appliances - get them checked, keep them safe INDG238 (rev2).

Landlords (A guide to landlords duties) INDG 285(rev1).

The Safe Use of Gas Cylinders INDG308.

Small-scale use of LPG in cylinders CHIS5.

Precautions at manually ignited gas-fired catering equipment CAIS3.

## **Priced Gas Guidance (HSE Books)**

Safety in the Installation and use of Gas Systems and Appliances (ACOP) L56 (rev 1998).  
A guide to the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996 L80.  
Standards of training in gas installation (ACOP) COP 20.

## **Additional Guidance**

Copies of the following leaflets are available from CORGI installers and Gas Consumers Council offices.

Carbon Monoxide: It's invisible and silent — but deadly  
A Guide to Gas Safety: Working together safely

LP Gas Association Codes of Practice and Guidance:

Code 7 Storage of full and empty LPG cylinders and cartridges

Code 24: Part1 The use of propane cylinders at residential premises

Part2 The use of butane cylinders at residential premises

Part3 Use of LPG cylinders in mobile catering vehicles and similar units

Part4 Use of LPG for catering at outdoor functions

Available from: The LP Gas Association, Pavilion16, Headlands Business Park, Salisbury Road, Ringwood, Hampshire H24 3PB.

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