

Technical Bulletin 014

Developed with HSE in Great Britain



Title: Gas Work

Date issued: 19 August 2010

Note: This version of Technical Bulletin (TB) 014 replaces the version originally published 1 April 2009 which is now withdrawn. This version has been reviewed and where appropriate revised to ensure that it remains both current and relevant.

This Technical Bulletin provides guidance to Gas Safe registered engineers/businesses on what is regarded as 'gas work' when undertaking 'Work' as defined in current gas safety legislation concerning the safe installation, maintenance and use of gas systems and appliances

Introduction

Gas Safe Register, in conducting its business, applies the definition and interpretation of 'gas work' as set out in the primary legislation concerning the safe installation, maintenance and use of gas systems and appliances, (e.g. in Great Britain (GB) – the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (GSIUR)) and the supporting Approved Code of Practice and Guidance associated with the GSIUR; Health and Safety Commission document - *Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances* (L56) ISBN 0-7176-1635-5 (Regulation 2, Guidance notes 23-25).

Note 1: Similar legislative requirements apply in other geographical areas covered by Gas Safe Register. For details of current gas safety legislation, building legislation and industry standards for the geographical areas covered by Gas Safe Register, see [Technical Bulletin \(TB\) 999^{\(1\)}](https://engineers.gassaferegister.co.uk) at: <https://engineers.gassaferegister.co.uk> - login and visit the Technical Information area.

Information is also provided for Gas Safe registered business that are considering and/or undertaking commissioning of gas installations carried out by others including those undertaken by illegal gas workers; see [Commissioning gas installation work undertaken by others](#) in this TB.

HSE interpretation

In addition to the above definition and interpretation, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in GB has made Gas Safe Register aware that they are applying the following interpretations when they write to businesses found to be carrying out gas work whilst not being registered with Gas Safe Register. These interpretations are also supported by the other health and safety enforcement authorities in the geographical areas covered by Gas Safe Register.

1. *"While a non-registered person may carry out "wet work" i.e. install water pipes and radiators for a heating system, any work on the gas boiler itself and the final connection of the water pipework to the boiler, must be performed by a Gas Safe registered engineer" (see [Note 2](#) below).*
2. *"It is not acceptable for a Gas Safe registered engineer to knowingly "sign-off" gas work that has been carried out by a person who is not registered **in order to circumvent the legal requirements**. Where this has occurred, both the registered and unregistered installer may face prosecution". **

**This does not however, mean that registered businesses/installers cannot undertake commissioning of installations where the gas user has “unwittingly” (for whatever reasons) had gas work carried out by an unregistered gas worker. In such situations the registered installer needs to be clear what would be expected of them should they decide to undertake this activity. Guidance on the extent of checks that registered installers should consider as necessary is given in [Commissioning gas installation work undertaken by others](#) in this TB.*

The HSE in GB has used both the GSIUR and the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) in applying their interpretation to the 2 situations above (also see [Note 1](#)).

Note 2: *The HSWA extends health and safety responsibilities to all parts of the work activities undertaken which may pose a risk to the public if not undertaken safely.*

Commissioning gas installation work undertaken by others

The following information is offered to Gas Safe registered engineers/business who are considering and/or undertaking the commissioning of gas installations carried out by others including those undertaken by illegal gas workers.

Gas Safe Register does not dispute that it is better for a qualified and competent Gas Safe registered engineer to check an installation by an illegal gas worker to ensure it is safe, than to leave it and risk it causing injury. However, Gas Safe Register agrees with the majority of registrants that those who commission illegal gas work are encouraging this activity.

Simply put, commissioning installations for illegal gas workers supports their activities and helps keep them in business. HSE have said that knowingly commissioning appliances for illegal gas workers is against the law, it can leave the Gas Safe registered engineer wide open to prosecution, as they take full responsibility for the installation and any faults that it may have. If you do not know who has installed the appliance then make sure you check all aspects of that installation to ensure it is safe to use.

Gas Safe Register is also aware that an increasing number of registered businesses are being approached by consumers asking for a new appliance or installation to be ‘commissioned’. This would possibly indicate that the appliance may have been installed by an illegal gas worker, and the consumer is trying to get the appliance ‘notified’ to Gas Safe Register so they can receive either a ‘Building Regulations Compliance Certificate’ or a ‘Declaration of Gas Safety’. Gas Safe registered engineers are well aware of the need to ensure a newly installed gas appliance is appropriately commissioned in accordance with the requirements of the appliance manufacturer. But it is also important to remember that commissioning of an appliance is a requirement in relevant gas safety legislation concerning the safe installation, maintenance and use of gas systems and appliances, (e.g. GSIUR) (see [Note 1](#)).

Regulation 33(1) of GSIUR states:

“Where a person installs a gas appliance at a time when gas is being supplied to the premises in which the appliance is installed, he shall immediately thereafter test its connection to the installation pipework to verify that it is gastight and examine the appliance and the gas fittings and other works for the supply of gas and any flue or means of ventilation to be used in connection with the appliance for the purpose of ascertaining whether –

- a) the appliance has been installed in accordance with these Regulations;*
- b) the operating pressure is as recommended by the manufacturer;*
- c) the appliance has been installed with due regard to any manufacturer's instructions provided to accompany the appliance; and*
- d) all gas safety controls are in proper working order”*

The requirements outlined above are not usually considered a problem as in many cases the Gas Safe registered engineer installing the appliance will also be the person carrying out the commissioning. However, if a Gas Safe registered engineer is commissioning work by someone that they suspect is an illegal gas worker, how can they be confident enough that the work they are taking full responsibility of, has indeed been fitted correctly?

Regulation 3(1) of the GSIUR states:

“No person shall carry out any work in relation to a gas fitting or gas storage vessel unless he is competent to do so”.

The HSE defines competence as a combination of both training and experience. Therefore, anyone who does work on a gas fitting (this includes appliances) or gas storage vessel must be competent to do so, whether or not they are required to be registered with Gas Safe Register.

A further important factor relating to this matter is the term “work” as defined in GSIUR. The definition of “work in relation to gas fitting” lists specific activities which are:

- maintaining, servicing, permanently adjusting, disconnecting, repairing, altering or renewing the fitting or purging it of air or gas;
- where the fitting is not readily movable, changing its position;
- removing the fitting.

Therefore, where a Gas Safe registered engineer is approached to commission an appliance that they themselves have not installed, they need to be aware that the standard of workmanship may not meet the minimum requirements of current legislation and installation standards.

It is for this reason that Gas Safe registered businesses need to seriously consider the request to commission another person's work, as the responsibility to ensure for the key points of GSIUR Regulation 33(1) outlined above (also see [Note 1](#)), rests with the commissioning engineer, which would mean them if they undertake the work. It is also important to realise that if a Gas Safe registered engineer decides to take on the responsibility of commissioning an appliance that they have not installed their self, as the commissioning engineer, they will take full responsibility for that installation.

This will include the requirement to ‘notify’ the appliance installation to Gas Safe Register (and where appropriate the Local Building Control Authority) and also the completion of any documents that may accompany the appliance to confirm commissioning, such as the Benchmark Logbook.

It is for these reasons that it is not just a cursory check of the appliance that needs to be done; the commissioning engineer will need to inspect any of the work carried out by the person who installed the appliance, which is likely to include lifting carpets and floorboards, climbing through roof spaces, or even exposing external buried pipework to ensure it has sufficient depth of cover to protect it from damage. They will also need to ensure installation pipework is correctly sized, sleeved through walls and corrosion protected where necessary.

This could be particularly difficult where pipework is located in a screeded concrete floor. Once the commissioning engineer has done all of this, they then need to ensure the installation complies fully with the appliance manufacturer's instructions (as required by Regulation 33(1)(c) above, which will include that adequate clearances have been provided from combustible materials and to allow for subsequent servicing and maintenance.

The commissioning engineer will need to ensure that the chimney/flue is correctly located with regard to property boundaries, doors, windows, air vents, etc. and that the discharge of the products of combustion will not cause a nuisance. They may even need to remove the flue itself to ensure it is correctly installed and sealed, such as a telescopic flue passing through a cavity wall.

Note 3: For guidance relating to room-sealed fanned draught gas appliance flue systems concealed within voids, reference should be made to [TB 008](#) at: <https://engineers.gassaferegister.co.uk> - login and visit the Technical Information area.

It could even be something as simple as ensuring that the fixings used to support the appliance on the wall are of the appropriate size and strength. We can then move onto other factors that may not be directly related to gas safety, but could still be covered by the requirement to ensure compliance with the appliance manufacturer's installation instructions. This will include issues such as the electrical installation, that the condensate pipework is correctly discharged and does the central heating system comply with the latest energy efficiency requirements – the list goes on.

With all of the above in mind, would a Gas Safe registered engineer really want to take responsibility for someone else's installation?

As far as Gas Safe Register is concerned, if we were subsequently asked to inspect the installation, the installation has become the commissioning engineers and the commissioning engineer, will be held responsible for any defects that were found and would be expected to put them right.

Note 4: *For general information about the process behind the development of Gas Safe Register Technical Bulletins and the expectations for all Stakeholders, see TB 1000 at: <https://engineers.gassaferegister.co.uk> - login and visit the Technical Information area.*

Bibliography

(1) TB 999 - Gas Safe Register Normative Document List

-o0o-