

Gas Safety

in your home

As a home owner (this includes leaseholders and shared owners) you are responsible for making sure the gas appliances in your home are safe.

You need to arrange and pay for a yearly gas safety check, which must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

This yearly check will ensure your gas appliances are safe to use – which could protect you and your family from gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.

This leaflet explains more about gas safety, carbon monoxide and the importance of gas servicing.

There is also a section on the recent changes to gas safety regulations. The regulation changes will require home owners with concealed boiler flues to take prompt action.



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What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that you can't see, taste or smell.

It is released when a carbon-containing fuel – such as gas, oil, coal, coke, petrol or wood – doesn't burn fully because not enough air is available.

How does an annual gas safety check protect against CO poisoning?

The majority of CO poisonings result from faulty gas appliances and flues from boilers, gas fires and cookers.

This is why home owners (leaseholders and shared owners) are required to have an annual gas safety check carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

An annual gas safety check will ensure your gas appliances are safe to use – which could save you and your family's life.

Why is CO dangerous?

Accidental exposure to CO kills more than 50 people each year in England and Wales. It can kill without warning, sometimes in a matter of minutes.

Low levels that don't kill you can still cause serious harm to your health. The poisoning effects of CO can be long-lasting.

What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

CO poisoning can easily be confused with other conditions. Symptoms to look for include headaches, breathlessness, nausea, dizziness, loss of consciousness and tiredness.

How else can I protect myself and my family from CO poisoning?

Install an audible CO detector in every room where there is a gas appliance or flue.

The alarm will sound if CO is present.

You can buy these alarms in DIY stores. They must display the following Kitemark standard: BS EN 50291:2001

Make sure that you follow the alarm manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance.

What about the CO detection patches and 'black-spot' indicators?

We recommend against these detectors as they will not alert you to the presence of CO as they will not sound to wake, or warn you if dangerous levels of CO develop.

Remember that fitting an audible CO alarm is not an alternative to an annual gas safety check.

Who should carry out the annual gas safety check?

It **must** be carried out by a gas engineer who is on the 'Gas Safe' register.

Gas Safe Register is the official body for gas safety in United Kingdom, Isle of Man and Guernsey.

To find a Gas Safe engineer in your area:

Visit: www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Call: **0800 408 5500**

TVH uses Central Heating Services (CHS) to service the boilers in our tenants' properties. You can contact them on **01252 522 471**.

Concealed Flues Safety Notice

Are you ready for Gas Safe regulation changes?

Some homes were built with boiler flues that cannot be inspected as they are hidden behind walls or ceilings.

From **1 January 2013** new gas safety regulations are coming into place. Under the new regulations, the entire length of gas flues from boilers must be visible during the annual gas safety check.

This is because a flue in poor condition, combined with a boiler that is not working properly could put you in danger from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

What action do I need to take?

If you have a boiler where all, or part of, the flue cannot be seen, you will need to arrange for inspection hatches to be fitted by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

You have until **31 December 2012** to arrange for inspection hatches to be installed but it's recommended that they are fitted as soon possible.

How do I know if my boiler has a concealed flue?

If your boiler is situated on an outside wall, it is unlikely you have this type of flue.

Additionally, if a Gas Safe registered engineer can see the entire boiler flue, you will not need to take any further action.

What happens if I don't have inspection hatches installed?

From 1 January 2013 if the flue cannot be inspected, Gas Safe registered engineers will have no option but to turn off your boiler, leaving you without heating or hot water.

They will advise you not to use your boiler until inspection hatches have been fitted in appropriate places.

My boiler has concealed flues - is it unsafe to use?

It does not mean that your flue system is suddenly unsafe. As long as your boiler passes a series of safety checks including having audible carbon monoxide alarms fitted it can be used normally for the time being.

Carbon monoxide alarms are not an alternative to being able to see the flue and you will still need to have inspection hatches fitted.

You have until 31 December 2012 for this work to be completed.

You need to take action now

If your property is less than two years old then contact your builder. If your property is between two and ten years old contact your home warranty provider, as you may be covered by them if there are defects in the flue. A list of the main home warranty providers is shown below. If your property is 10 years or older you should contact a Gas Safe registered engineer.

List of main home warranty providers:

- **NHBC** (National House Building Council)
0844 633 1000
www.nhbc.co.uk
- **Premier Guarantee**
08444 120 888
www.premierguarantee.co.uk
- **Zurich Building Guarantee**
01252 387 535
www.zurich.co.uk

Summary

Home owners are responsible for the safety of gas appliances in their home.

You must arrange and pay for a yearly gas safety check, which must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer, within 12 months of the previous annual gas service.

You should install audible carbon monoxide detectors in every room where there is a gas appliance or a gas flue, as soon as possible

All concealed flues must have access hatches installed by 31st December 2012.



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