

gas focus

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

Amendments to the above regulations were approved by Executive Council on 21 January 2003 pursuant to the Gas Standards Act 1972 and published in the Government Gazette No. 12 of 2003 on 31 January 2003.

The amendments update references in the Regulations or add to the Regulations seven Australian Standards that contain requirements for the safety and adequate performance of consumers' gas installations. References to these standards throughout the Regulations have also been amended.

The following standards were updated:

- AS 5601/AG 601 – 2002
Gas Installations
- AS 3814/AG 501 – 2002
Industrial and Commercial Gas-fired Appliances
- AS 2739 – 1999
Natural Gas Fuel Systems for Vehicle Engines
- AS/NZS 1596 – 2002
The Storage and Handling of LP Gas

The following standards were added:

- AS 4732 – 2002 *LP Gas fuel systems for marine engines* – This is a new standard, which specifies the requirements for LP gas fuel systems for marine engines for either the propulsion of the craft or for powering auxiliary engines. It augments the existing AS/NZS 1425 – 1999.
- AS/NZS 2885 – 2002 *Pipelines – Gas and liquid petroleum, Part 3: Field pressure testing* – This standard specifies methods for pressure testing of petroleum pipelines constructed in accordance with AS 2885 Part 1 and Part 2. It may also be used for testing of other pipelines including those designed to AS 1697 – 1981. These Standards (AS 2885.1 & .2 and AS 1697) are already called up in Schedule 7 and including AS 2885.3 completes the suite.
- AS 3961 – 1991 *Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Vehicle Fuel System Code* – This standard specifies the requirements for

the design, construction and operation of installation for the storage and handling of liquefied natural gas (LNG). With the increasing use of LNG for vehicle fuel systems, we have set safety standards by adopting an Australian Standard that specifies the technical and safety requirements for automotive refuelling station installations.

The amendments to the regulations also adopt increased gas operative licence fees. The increases are as follows:

- Gasfitting permits
– increase from \$35.00 to \$50.00
- Gasfitting authorisations
– increase from \$225.00 to \$230.00

The licence fee increases will take effect immediately (see details in this edition of the Gas Focus).

Compliance with the added Australian Standards AS 4732 – 2002, AS/NZS 2885 – 2002 and AS 3961 – 1991 applies immediately. Compliance with the updated standards AS 5601/AG 601 – 2002, AS 3814/AG 501 – 2002, AS 2739 – 1999 and AS/NZS 1596 – 2002 is through a transitional period such that a person who is required to comply with these standards may comply with the previous standards for six months since gazettal or until 31 July 2003.

Summary of Changes to AS 5601 – 2002 Gas Installations

There have been significant changes made to the pipe sizing tables. Tables for Towns Gas and PE/AL composite pipe have been deleted and tables have been included for corrugated stainless steel pipe, and pressure drops of 0.75kpa (to cater for the introduction of NG metering pressure of 2.75kpa) and 10kpa (to cater for polyethylene pipe operating on LPG) have been added. Some anomalies in the existing tables were corrected.

References to the Authority have been removed and replaced, where appropriate,

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with the Technical Regulator, Energy Safety.

Special Local Requirements in Appendix L have been reduced to a minimum with the focus being on

maximum harmonisation between the States. Note that is now a requirement in WA for water heaters to be installed with a gas isolation valve.

Summary of Changes to AS 3814 – 2002 Industrial and commercial gas-fired appliances

The Scope and application of the standard has been amended.

References to the Authority have been removed and replaced, where appropriate, with the Technical Regulator, Energy Safety.

References to approved equipment and components have been removed and replaced with “certified”.

There are several technical clarification amendments including the definition of “Gas Tight”.

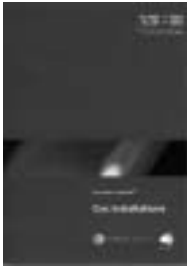
Gas fitters should familiarise themselves with the amendment Regulations and the Standards that apply to their work. The Regulations, AS/NZS 5601 and AS/NZS 3814 are available for purchase from Energy Safety. Copies of Gas Standards are available from Standards Australia, Ground Floor, 165 Adelaide Terrace, East Perth, WA 6004. They may also be purchased by telephoning 1300 654 646 or on-line at www.standards.com.au.

Energy Safety will give presentations on the Regulations and Gas Standards at the Master Plumbers and Gasfitters Association (MP&GA) trade nights as follows:

Geraldton	– 21st May
Kalgoorlie	– 18th June
Albany	– 29th October
Bunbury	– 30th October

MP&GA has already held presentations in Perth

For more details about these presentations, please contact the MP&GA by telephoning 9272 5244.



Water Heaters in High Rise Apartments

There are still large numbers of water heaters installed [internally] in high-rise apartments. These are not the water heaters installed on balconies and walkways but those installed internally and flued on multiple vertical flued systems, some of which rely on large roof-mounted exhaust fans for extraction.

Some of these systems have been installed since the building booms of the 60's and 70's and may be in need of major maintenance. If a person becomes aware of these installations, for example whilst servicing such an appliance, the details should be notified to Energy Safety's Gas Inspection Branch by telephoning 9422 5297 so that the installation can be assessed.



Policy Statement – Replacement of Gas Water Heaters

This policy applies where the existing installation complies with previously applicable standards or was given a dispensation or special approval for installation of that appliance.

Where an existing gas water heating system is replaced, provided the installation meets the following criteria, it is acceptable for the replacement water heater to be installed in the original location even if the installation then does not comply with current regulations or codes, subject to the following conditions, all of which must be met:

- There is no practical alternative location available for the installation of the water heater;
- The replacement water heater has a similar capacity (not to exceed +10% of existing gas consumption capacity), the same operating pressure, is a similar type of unit (instantaneous for



Typical water heater installation that will require an exemption

instantaneous) and has a similar physical size; and

- There is reasonable evidence the installation complied with previously applicable standards or was given a dispensation or special approval for that part of that installation.

This policy does not apply if a known safety concern has been identified or should reasonably be able to be identified in relation to that part of the installation.

It is the gas fitter's responsibility to ensure that the appliance manufacturer's installation instructions are satisfied and that the warranty is valid for appliances installed under this policy.

Where replacement of an existing water heater involves a significant increase in gas consumption capacity (greater than +10%) of the unit, the proposed installation will be considered as an upgrade. In this case the modified part of the installation will have to comply with the latest requirements of the codes and standards. In such cases, where compliance with some requirements of the code is not possible, the gas fitter must apply in writing to the Director of Energy Safety for an exemption or variation to prescribed requirements prior to any gasfitting being carried out. Such applications must only be made if the gas fitter is satisfied that the proposed exemption or variation will not negatively affect the safe performance of the installation.

The correct fittings as per AS 5601 – 2002 must be used in all installations.

Register of Gas Fitters – Certificate of Competency Holders

Energy Safety is aware that data held for some Certificate of Competency holders is out of date. Many of these operatives may no longer be active in the industry and, as such, have not maintained their competencies. It may be that a number of them are not even aware that Energy Safety holds the register of gas fitters; their Certificate may have been issued when the State Energy Commission of WA was the regulator.

Consequently, Energy Safety is concerned that there may be many operatives in industry who are not aware of changes in standards and regulations that affect the way in which gasfitting work can be carried out.

To improve the integrity of the data held on the register of gas fitters, Energy Safety is writing to all Certificate of Competency holders to update their contact details. Operatives are being asked to confirm their address details and to provide updated information where necessary. Operatives who are no longer active in the industry will also be asked if they would prefer to surrender their Certificate of Competency.

Certificate of Competency holders who confirm that they are working as gas fitters will be included on the register of active gas fitters. This register [with confirmed operatives' details] will be the register provided to gas supply authorities. Gas suppliers will not be able to accept Notices of Completion from operatives who are not included in this register.

Persons who do not respond to this mail out will be retained on the main register, as required by legislation, but will be treated as if they are inactive until such time as they contact Energy Safety with their new address details.

In the future, Energy Bulletins will be mailed to all gas fitters who maintain current address details, to keep them up to date with the latest in regulatory issues and requirements.

National Competencies for Gasfitting

National competencies for gasfitting and plumbing have been under development for nearly 16 years. The industry is now close to agreement.

The process has been painstaking, dealing with many differing points of view and many committees working in different directions. Energy Safety is now being consulted directly for its input as the Western Australian gas regulator. Energy Safety is working with TAFE, the Master Plumbers & Gas Fitters Association, the Department of Education & Training and the Building & Construction Industry Training Council to ensure WA has an input into the Gasfitting National Competencies.

Energy Safety consulted widely with WA industry groups when new classes of gasfitting [G, I, E and P] were introduced in 1999. From those four working groups formed, one for each class of gasfitting, a number of training guidelines were produced. These guidelines were issued to training providers and interested parties in December 2001.

Energy Safety's guidelines require any new courses to meet the requirements of national competencies where possible. National competencies for gasfitting and plumbing fall within the Construction Services Sector (Class G gas fitters in WA).

Gas fitter training has changed very little since the introduction of gas fitter licensing in 1983. It is now required that new gas fitter training courses be formatted to meet WA licensing requirements and the national competencies. It is expected that this new training will meet the needs of the new millennium and should improve opportunity for gas fitters in this State.

Although new courses in Class G gasfitting are being introduced in 2003, the final format may not be in place until 2004 when the States and Territories have agreed to the national competencies. This should not affect trainees and apprentices who wish to obtain a Class G permit at the end of their training.

Training for automotive gas fitters (Class E, LP Gas) based on national

competencies is already available through TAFE.

Energy Safety will continue to work with training providers to ensure satisfactory licensing outcomes.

Appeals Against a Notice of Defect

The Director of Energy Safety recently received appeals against two Notices of Defect. In these instances, and unfortunately for the appellants, both appeals were dismissed on the grounds of being outside the requirement to be submitted within 48 hours of receiving the Notice of Defect.

Regulation 31 of the Gas Standards (Gas Installations and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999 states:

Appeal against a notice of defects

A registered gas fitter may, within 48 hours of receiving a notice of defects, appeal in writing to the Director against the notice.

On an appeal under subregulation (1), the Director may confirm vary or cancel the notice of defects and the Director's decision is final.

The person must comply with the final decision within 7 days.

In order to have any reasonable prospect of success when appealing a Notice of Defect, supporting evidence needs to accompany the appeal. Such information should include:

- a copy of the notice of defect;
- photographs/sketches of the area surrounding the relevant part of the installation;
- plans of the construction of the premises (or parts of); and
- the appliance manufacturer's installation instructions.

If this information is provided in a timely manner, the Director is able to make an informed decision and then communicate the outcome to all parties.

If an appeal is dismissed, the appellant will need to rectify the non-compliant gas installation within 7 days of receiving the Notice of Defect. To complete this matter, the notice of rectification (found on the lower portion of the Notice of Defect) will need to be completed and returned to the inspector who issued the Notice of Defect.

Identity of Operatives and Lost or Stolen Licences

Energy Safety licenses electrical contractors, electrical workers and gas fitters who, by the nature of their business, may have access to homes and businesses, including sensitive sites. This is becoming more of a security issue in the current environment and it is now more important to ensure the correct identity of persons being licensed.

Energy Safety is currently reviewing its processes and considering the most appropriate methods of checking a licence applicant's identity, and suitability to be licensed, particularly when they first make application.

It has also reviewed its processes for reissuing lost or stolen electrical worker or gas fitter licences and certificates of registration. Previously, new licence documents were issued with the same licence number. In future, if a licence holder reports his/her licence or registration as lost or stolen, the licence will be cancelled and new documents issued with a new electrical worker/gas fitter number.

To assist employers and others, details of lost and stolen licences will be listed in future Energy Bulletins.

Fee Increases for Electrical and Gas Licences

Fees for application, registration and renewal of registration of licences for electrical workers, electrical contractors, in-house electrical

installers and electrical contractors were increased on 31 January 2003. Application and re-application fees for gas permit and authorisation holders were also increased.

The fee increases were necessary to move toward full cost recovery in respect of expenditure associated with administering electrical and gas licensing and related services.

The purpose of licensing is to ensure the competence of persons who work in industry, thus ensuring high standards of safety for the community generally. The system of licensing for electrical and gas operatives is operated to maintain these standards of safety for the public and industry.

It is anticipated that only one more "step increase" in electrical worker/gas fitter licence fees will be required to bring them to full cost recovery. After that, fees are expected to be adjusted annually only to cover costs due to inflation.

Unfortunately, as the costs involved in administration (including audits, enforcement actions etc.) of this system rise, it is necessary to increase licence fees.

The new fees are:

Electrical worker licence	\$50 pa
Electrical worker application	\$30
Electrical contractor licence	\$320 pa
Electrical in-house installer licence	\$160 pa
Electrical contractor/ in-house application	\$60
Gas authorisations	\$230 pa
Gas permit holder fees	\$50 pa

These fee increases were published in the Government Gazette on 31 January 2003 and became effective from that date.

Disciplinary Action Taken by the Gas Licensing Committee and Director of Energy Safety

1 November 2002 to 31 January 2003

Six gas operatives were dealt with during this period with the following outcomes:

D Varian Certificate of competency licence cancelled at operative's request

A Moulton Warning letter issued

D Beament Formal Inquiry held

No further action was required for the three other operatives.

D J Beament (GF 007940)

Mr Beament carried out gasfitting work at a factory in Wangara.

The work was not in accordance with the *Gas standards Act 1972* or the *Gas Standards (Gasfitting and Consumer Gas Installations) Regulations 1999*. He failed to install pressure test points at or near the inlet and outlet of consumer piping pressure regulators and he used a prohibited fitting. He also failed to pressure test after completing the gasfitting work.

Mr Beament's permit was suspended immediately. To regain the permit, he must undertake and successfully complete the "Gas Installations II" course.

PROSECUTIONS FOR BREACHES OF THE GAS STANDARDS ACT 1972

The following gas fitter was prosecuted in July 2002. The details were not listed in a previous edition of the Gas Focus.

Breach	Name (and suburb of residence at time of offence)	Licence No.	Fine \$	Costs \$
<p>Installed a water heater in a position contrary to the manufacturer's instructions Regulation 20(1)(b) GSR (1 charge)</p> <p>Installed hot plates contrary to the manufacturer's instructions Regulation 20(1)(b) GSR (1 charge)</p> <p>Installed the flue terminal of a water heater in a position contrary to Clause 5.13.6.5 of AS 5601/AG 601 Regulations 18 & 32(1)(b) GSR (2 charges)</p> <p>Installed piping without adequate supports contrary to Clause 4.3 of AS 5601/AG 601 Regulations 18 & 32(1)(b) GSR (1 charge)</p>	John Fyfe (Mandurah)	GF 001360	800.00	355.50

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

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