

# GAS SAFETY Bulletin

## Inaugural Message

Since the implementation of the Gas Safety Ordinance in 1990, we have formed an effective regulatory framework for the gas industry in Hong Kong. We have also joined hands with the trade to draw up various codes of practice for gas installations with a view to enhancing gas safety in Hong Kong. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who have made contributions to the trade.

In summer this year, we conducted a Regulatory Services Trade Survey among the trade, hoping to share ideas with you so that the quality and performance of our regulatory services could be further enhanced. The response to the survey was encouraging. One of the suggestions we received was that we should strengthen communication with the gas trade. We appreciate your valuable opinion and hence we proceed with the preparation of this publication.

The Gas Safety Bulletin is published for the Registered Gas Contractors and Installers in Hong Kong and aims to enhance our communication with the gas trade and update trade members on the latest gas safety requirements, safe practices and technical guidelines. The awareness of trade members on gas safety is closely related to the safety and well-being of the general public. We hope that the trade can make reference to this publication as far as possible.

Effective communication is by no means uni-directional, and EMSD would be pleased to receive feedback from the trade on gas safety, law enforcement and regulatory issues. Let us join hands to further raise the level of gas safety in Hong Kong. 🔥

**Lai Sze-hoi, Roger**  
Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services

## The Safety of Gas Dryers

### Two Accidents relating to Laundries

Not long ago, two fire accidents involving gas dryers occurred in Hong Kong. There was no casualty in the accidents, but the laundries suffered substantial damage. The accidents were reported in the media, and the safety of gas dryers has become a matter of public concern.

To prevent the recurrence of such accidents, we have conducted a sample survey of laundries in Hong Kong. It was found that the majority of the laundries sampled complied with the basic gas safety technical requirements while a few of them had to make alterations in their gas installations. As such, we need to

conduct a critical review to ensure the gas safety in the laundry trade.

### Gas Safety Legislation and Technical Requirements for Laundries

As the general gas safety legislation and technical requirements are familiar to many of you, we need not elaborate on them. But it is of importance to note that the exhaust system of a gas dryer is part of a gas installation, and thus should be installed by a registered gas installer. The exhaust pipe of a gas dryer should be installed in strict accordance with the technical guidelines provided by the manufacturer. In general, the exhaust pipe should preferably be made of hard galvanized sheet steel and have access panels

on the surface for maintenance and cleaning. The exhaust pipe should be as short as possible. Combustion product venting may be hindered if it is too long or has too many bends. If it is not possible to make the exhaust pipe short because of technical or environmental constraints, a mechanical exhaust system should be used. However, an interlocking device should be installed between the gas supply system and the ventilation system to avoid danger arising from accumulation of combustion product. For the relevant technical requirements, please refer to the Code of Practice GU 12: Installation of Mechanical Exhaust System for Gas Appliances (Rated Heat Input Up To 70kW).

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([http://www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/c\\_download/paps/gas/gu12\\_chi.pdf](http://www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/c_download/paps/gas/gu12_chi.pdf))

Earlier on, we have specially arranged two briefing sessions on gas safety for the laundry trade to ensure that the trade members have certain knowledge of gas safety. The Gas Industry Training Centre of the Vocational Training Council has organized evening courses for those who are in the laundry trade to offer relevant technical training to them.

### Concerns of the Trade

At the time we made it clear that the exhaust pipe of a gas dryer should be installed and maintained by a registered gas installer, some members of the gas trade worry that they might not meet the standard required for installing exhaust pipes of gas installations. Some of them also suspected that we tried to shift the duties of exhaust pipe installers onto

registered gas installers, thereby putting more pressure on the trade. Meanwhile, gas suppliers were worried about the technical standard of their staff, who might unknowingly supply gas to an unsafe gas dryer, etc.

In fact, meeting public expectations is an important issue in every industry nowadays. The gas trade is no exception. Public expectations of gas safety have become increasingly higher. What we need to do is rise to the challenges ahead. If members of the trade do not have much confidence in the installation and maintenance of exhaust pipes, they are welcome to enrol for the evening courses offered by the Gas Industry Training Centre of the Vocational Training Council in order to raise their technical standard (For details, please refer to the "Training News" on p.4.). Gas suppliers could, based on the inspection records provided by laundries, ascertain if



the gas system of laundries functions properly before supplying gas to their customers. Once the trade members could master the skills in the installation of exhaust pipes, customer services could be extended.

### Our Commitment to the public

We are committed to ensuring gas safety for the community. We understand that there are still a number of problems facing us. With the concerted efforts of all trade members, we believe that these problems can be resolved in due course. 🔥

## Case Sharing



In February this year, we received a report that an LPG distributor in Yuen Long was alleged to have used LPG cylinder wagons to store and supply cylinders without the written approval of a registered gas supply company.

We found a light goods vehicle and a LPG cylinder wagon at the scene, both of which carried more than 100 cylinders in total (the total water capacity was about 3,000 litres). We also found that the LPG distributor was neither a registered gas supply company nor an approved gas distributor. After investigation, we prosecuted the responsible person of the LPG distributor for the following:

- (i) transporting LPG without the approval in writing of a registered gas supply company;
- (ii) carrying on the business of a gas supply company without registering with EMSD; and
- (iii) carrying LPG cylinders without valid permits issued in respect of the wagons.

When making the judgement, the magistrate reprimanded the defendant for committing these offences which endangered the lives and property of the public. The defendant was fined \$12,500 and the 100-odd cylinders were confiscated.

If you discover any illegal distributors or cases which violate gas safety regulations, please report to us and give us relevant information. 🔥

## Legal Knowledge

According to section 35 of the Gas Safety Ordinance concerning the requirement for "service of notices", a notice (e.g. a letter or an improvement notice) required to be served under this Ordinance on a person shall be deemed to be so served if it is:

- (i) delivered to him in person; or
- (ii) left at his last known address for service; or
- (iii) sent by post to him at such address.

As registered gas installers or registered gas contractors, you are required to ensure that your addresses we keep on file are up-to-date to safeguard your interest and to allow us to send you the latest information. If you have changed or will change your address, please complete the form enclosed and return it to us as soon as possible. 🔥

# The Use of Natural Gas in Hong Kong

expected that the share of natural gas in the international fuel market may increase.

## CLP Power

In 1996, the CLP Power started to import natural gas from the Yacheng gas field, off Hainan Island through a 778 km pipeline to generate electricity, ending its sole dependence on coal and nuclear energy for power generation. This change helps to reduce the discharges of sulphur dioxide, suspended particulates etc. generated by the combustion of coal.

The CLP Power recently disclosed that to further replace coal by natural gas, it intended to build a liquefied natural gas storage terminal in Hong Kong to maintain a stable supply of natural gas to the Black Point Power Station in Tuen Mun for power generation.

## HKCG

The "town gas" currently consumed by the public is made from naphtha, a petroleum product, instead of coal, so its price is affected by the petroleum price. Since the price of natural gas is relatively stable, when the price of crude oil is high, natural gas is cheaper than naphtha.

In accordance with a 25-year contract signed by the Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited (HKCG) and the Shenzhen authorities, from 2007, Shenzhen will provide Hong Kong with

330,000 tons liquefied natural gas annually (equivalent to 60% of the feedstock for gas production). Natural gas will be transmitted from the liquefied natural gas terminal at Mirs Bay, Shenzhen to the gas production plant in Tai Po through two 32 km submarine pipelines. Since naphtha will be replaced by natural gas in gas production, HKCG's dependence on naphtha will be reduced substantially.

## HEC

The Hongkong Electric Company Limited (HEC) is constructing a 92 km submarine pipeline, which connects the liquefied natural gas terminal at Mirs Bay, Shenzhen to the Lamma Power Station, to import natural gas for power generation. The pipeline laying works were completed in May 2005. Current estimates indicate that the submarine pipeline will start transmission of natural gas in mid-2006.



## Natural Gas

Natural gas, whose main component is methane, is a "colourless, odourless and non-toxic" fuel. Being cheaper and more environmentally friendly than coal or petroleum, natural gas can be used to generate electricity and produce town gas. Current estimates indicate that natural gas reserves can support current world demand for at least 67 years, so it is



## Guide to Flexible Gas Tubing

There are currently 3 types of approved flexible gas tubing:



Tubing made of rubber



Tubing made of rubber with stainless steel braiding or amouring



Tubing made of stainless steel with stainless steel braiding or amouring

Flexible gas tubing is a common gas fitting used to connect a gas appliance (e.g. a cooker) to the gas supply point, whether in a piped or cylinder gas supply system. In accordance with the Code of Practice GU01, the government has established regulations to control the import and manufacture of flexible gas tubing for use in Hong Kong by means of an "approval scheme". From 1 January 2005 onwards, approved types of flexible gas tubing would bear "approval marks" to further enhance public safety. Members of the industry should take note of and observe the following points.

Please identify an approval mark:

EMSD APPROVAL 機電工程署批准 GTxxxx  
EXPIRY 期限 MM/YYYY

xxxx denotes Approval Number  
MM/YYYY denotes Month/Year

**注意** 軟喉須於使用期限 (MM/YYYY) 屆滿前更換  
**ATTENTION** Renew flexible gas tubing before the expiry date (MM/YYYY)

Approved List of flexible gas tubing for low pressure applications can be found in EMSD web-page.



You are welcome to make an enquiry or a report to our office  
Hotline: 1823 Homepage: <http://www.emsd.gov.hk>

## Gas Statistics

### Facts about Registered Gas Installers and Registered Gas Contractors

You have probably served the gas industry for many years, but do you know how many registered gas installers and gas contractors are there in Hong Kong?

Up to the end of June this year, there are more than 432 registered gas contractors and 3,750 registered gas installers in Hong Kong. Classes of gas installation work in respect of which installers so registered are as follows (Note: some installers possess registration for more than one class):



## Training News

At present, there are more than 800 laundries in Hong Kong. Most laundries have clothes drying machines, the majority of which are gas dryers. Although the operation of a gas dryer is simple, accidents will occur if it is not installed and maintained properly. As such, it is important to install, operate and maintain gas dryer properly. The objective of this course is to enhance the gas industry's awareness of the safety issues concerning the installation and operation of gas dryers.

### Organizer

Gas Industry Training Centre, Vocational Training Council

### Course Outline

- Common causes of gas dryer accidents
- Introduction to the gas safety legislation
- The importance of the exhaust and ventilation system and the relevant calculation and construction methods
- Proper use of gas dryers
- The construction and safe operation of a typical laundry workshop

### Enquiry

For details of this course, please call Miss Wong of the Vocational Training Council on 2449 1334.

## How to Contact Us

We look forward to receiving your valuable feedback about this bulletin so that we may continue to improve it. If you have any comments or enquires, please forward them to us by fax or e-mail (Please state "Gas Safety Bulletin-Feedback") with your contact information (either telephone no., address, fax no. or e-mail address). We will give you a reply as soon as possible.

Fax: 2576 5945

E-mail: [ecard@emsd.gov.hk](mailto:ecard@emsd.gov.hk)

A souvenir will be given to the first 30 respondents.

### Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ RGI No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Employed RGC: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No. : \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_