

GAS SAFETY Bulletin



Message from the Editor

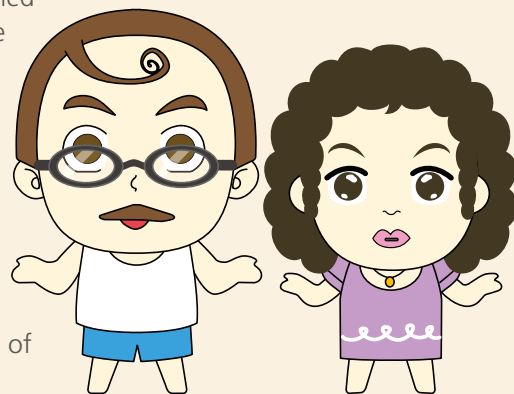
While summer vacation is just around the corner, we are pleased to present you with the 16th issue of Gas Safety Bulletin. This issue carries a feature article on how to avoid damaging the gas pipes and electric conduits concealed inside the walls. Also included in this issue are legal tips on gas safety, the regulations for registered gas contractors and installation location for flue apertures of gas water heaters, as well as the criteria for a gas contractor to carry on his business. The gas incident and prosecution statistics by type from January to December 2012 are also provided for your reference.

Causes of

Damage to

Pipes/Conduits Concealed Inside the Walls

Drilling or digging through walls is often involved in decoration work carried out at housing estates or our homes. Such work may include the replacement of old gas pipes, water pipes, electric conduits that are concealed inside the walls, or replacement of fire services installations, or just general environment improvements work. Since many installation pipes and electric conduits are concealed inside the walls, if the worker is careless and damages the concealed pipes/conduits when digging through the walls, it may result in gas leakage or electric shock threatening the safety of the worker as well as members of the public. To ensure the safety of all parties concerned, this feature article provides the basic safety guidelines on conducting decoration work involving drilling and digging through the walls, so as to minimise the risk of accidents due to damaged or concealed gas pipes or electric conduits.



Points to note for users

An installation pipe is a gas pipe that supplies gas to a particular user. Some of the installation pipes may be concealed inside the walls. Generally speaking, the user should arrange regular inspection and maintenance of the installation pipes behind the gas meter to ensure gas safety, while the gas supply company is responsible for the inspection of the service pipes before the gas meter if the pipes belong to the gas supply company.

The main points about maintenance are available in the pamphlet *Arrange to Conduct Regular Inspections and Maintenance of Service Risers and Installation Pipes* compiled by EMSD.

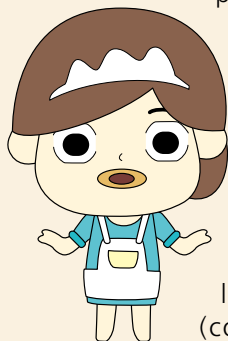
As far as electrical safety is concerned, wires concealed inside floor slabs, ceilings or walls are generally laid inside metallic or plastic conduits (commonly known as "conduits") as

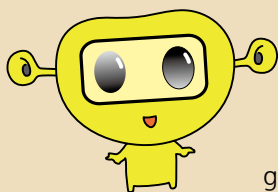
part of a fixed electrical installation. Under the Electricity Ordinance (Chapter 406), all electrical work on fixed electrical installations (including installation, commissioning, inspection, testing, maintenance, modification, repair, supervision and certification) should be conducted by registered electrical contractors and registered electrical workers.

When decoration work is carried out, the occupant should demand that the contractor and the workers concerned to take reasonable steps to avoid damaging the gas pipes or electric conduits concealed inside the walls. If the decoration work involves fixed electrical installations, the contractor employed must be a registered electrical contractor. If the decoration work involves gas installations, the contractor employed must be a registered gas contractor.

Points to note for decoration contractors

The decoration contractor must know the position of

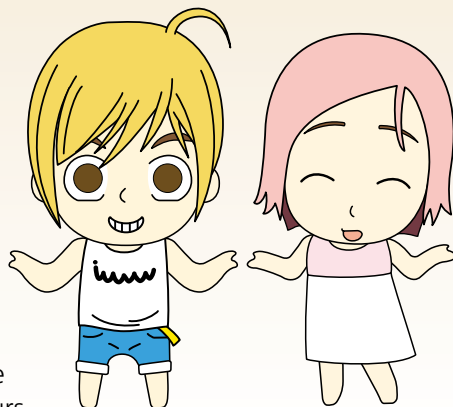




the gas and electrical installations inside the flat in which decoration work is carried out, in particular the position of the emergency gas control valve and the distribution board, so that the gas or electricity supply can be stopped immediately if an emergency arises. Before drilling or digging through the floor slab, the ceiling or the wall, the decoration contractor may ask the gas supply company or the property management company concerned for the records of the layout arrangement of the concealed pipes, so as to confirm the position of the pipes and avoid drilling or digging holes at where the gas pipes are located. The decoration contractor must be very careful when carrying out the work. If there are any uncertainties, manual tools instead of electric tools should be used. The decoration contractor can also use a metal detector to locate the exact position of the pipes concealed inside the walls before carrying out the work, in order to reduce the chance of damaging the concealed pipes.

What to do if a concealed gas pipe is damaged accidentally and a gas leak occurs?

Where possible, you should stop the gas supply immediately by turning off the emergency control valve upstream of the gas meter. Extinguish all naked flames and open all windows and doors wide to disperse the gas. Do not use the telephone or operate any electrical switches. If the gas leak is serious, leave the premises at once and notify your neighbours




to evacuate, but do not press any doorbells. Leave the building by the stairs, dial 999 to notify the Fire Services Department and wait for emergency services personnel to attend the scene.

What to do if a concealed electric conduit is damaged accidentally?

If a concealed electric conduit is damaged accidentally, you should immediately switch off the main switch of the flat, affix suitable labels near the damaged parts and set up a screen to avoid inadvertent contact with the damaged parts by others. In addition, you should immediately arrange for a registered electrical contractor to carry out repair work. The register of registered electrical contractors is available for public inspection at:

- (i) EMSD website: www.emsd.gov.hk;
- (ii) Public Enquiry Service Centres of District Offices; or
- (iii) EMSD Customer Services Office on G/F, 3 Kai Shing Street, Kowloon.

How to make enquiries?

For further information on gas or electrical installations, please contact the relevant registered gas contractors or registered electrical contractors/workers. You may also call the Citizen's Easy Link 1823 or visit the EMSD website at www.emsd.gov.hk. 

2013 Gas Safety Briefing

A gas safety briefing was organised for the trade in the morning of 21 February this year at the theatre of the Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre covering the following topics:

- Points to note on safety and use of LPG cylinder wagons;
- Code of Practice GU 21: Requirements for Town Gas Installations for Catering Purposes in Restaurants and Food Preparation Establishments;
- Dangerous Gas Installation Notice record;
- Service life expiry date labels/markings of flexible gas tubings;
- Points to note for registered gas installers and registered gas contractors;
- Introduction on fuel gas application training courses organised by the Vocational Training Council (VTC).

The briefing was well attended by the trade. EMSD colleagues and VTC Chief Instructor were on hand to



provide detailed presentations on gas safety matters and the fuel gas application training courses organised by VTC. Issues were raised enthusiastically by the floor and discussed in a lively and positive interchange during the Q&A session at the end of the briefing. To learn more about the briefing, please click on the following link:

http://www.emsd.gov.hk/emsd/eng/pps/gas_igt.shtml 



Only Registered Gas Contractors May Carry on the Business of a Gas Contractor

As you may already know, only registered gas contractors may carry on the business of a gas contractor; and only registered gas installers employed by registered gas contractors may carry out gas installation work appropriate to the class by which they are registered.

We would like to share with you four reported incidents/accidents that we handled recently. All four cases involved non-registered gas contractors carrying out gas installation work.

Case 1: A kitchen design company, which was a non-registered gas contractor, was found to have carried out the installation work of gas cooking appliances.


Case 2: A registered gas installer, who was neither a registered gas contractor nor employed by one, was found to have carried out the installation work of gas cooking

appliances.

Case 3: A registered gas installer, who was neither a registered gas contractor nor employed by one, was found to have carried out the modification work of gas pipes.

Case 4: A decoration company, which was a non-registered gas contractor, was found to have carried out the installation work of gas grills.

Pursuant to regulation 12(1) of the Gas Safety (Registration of Gas Installers and Gas Contractors) Regulations, no person other than a registered gas contractor may carry on the business of a gas contractor. Any person who contravenes this regulation commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for 6 months.

The persons involved in these four cases were prosecuted and convicted of contravening this regulation. They were fined \$2,500, \$1,500, \$2,500 and \$3,000 respectively. 


Regulations for Registered Gas Contractors

Members of the gas trade may already know very well that registered gas contractors are subject to the Gas Safety (Registration of Gas Installers and Gas Contractors) Regulations. This column highlights some of these regulations and serves as a reminder for our readers.

- **Regulation 12(1):** No person other than a registered gas contractor shall carry on the business of a gas contractor.
- **Regulation 20:** A registered gas contractor who ceases to carry on business as a gas contractor at any office or commences to carry on business as a gas contractor at any office shall not later than 21 days after such cessation or commencement, give written notification thereof to the Authority.
- **Regulation 21:** A registered gas contractor shall not publish an advertisement relating to, or in connection with, his business as a gas contractor unless he specifies in the advertisement that he is a registered gas contractor.
- **Regulation 22:** A registered gas contractor shall ensure, so far as is practicable, that his employees do not personally carry out, or supervise any individual who personally carries out, gas installation work in contravention of any of the requirements under the Ordinance applicable to such work.
- **Regulation 23(1):** Each registered gas contractor shall maintain records of all gas installation work carried out by him and shall keep such records for a period of not less than


2 years after the gas installation work concerned was carried out.

- **Regulation 23(3):** A person who ceases, for whatever reason, to be a registered gas contractor shall as soon as is reasonable and practicable but in any case not later than 30 days after ceasing to be a registered gas contractor, provide to the Authority the records of the gas installation work carried out within not less than 2 years.
- **Regulation 24:** A registered gas contractor who changes his name or address for service by post after his registration as a gas contractor shall give written notification to the Authority of such change not later than 21 days of such change.
- **Regulation 25(1):** If a registered gas contractor is convicted of an offence against the Gas Safety Ordinance, or is considered by the Gas Authority as not complying with a requirement under the Gas Safety Ordinance with which it is his obligation to comply, he or she may be subject to the following disciplinary actions:
 - (a) cancellation of registration;
 - (b) suspension of registration; or
 - (c) be reprimanded.

Disciplinary actions were taken against two registered gas contractors in the past year. 

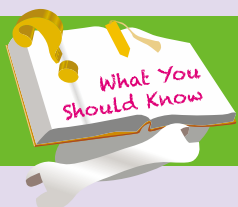
On another front, letters were sent by recorded delivery to all registered gas installers on 9 July 2012 reminding them of the requirement under regulation 11 of the Gas Safety (Registration of Gas Installers and Gas Contractors) Regulations that any registered gas installer who changes his name or address for service by post specified in his application under regulation 5 after registration as a gas installer must notify the Authority in writing of such change not later than 21 days after such change takes place. Any registered gas installer who, without reasonable excuse, contravenes regulation 11 commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of \$1,000. As some of the mails sent were undeliverable and returned by the post office, some registered gas installers have failed to submit the

required information to date.

We therefore have reasons to believe that some registered gas installers could have contravened the above legal requirement. We reiterated the above legal requirement at a briefing held in February in order to deal with the situation. If the registered gas installers involved still do not take the initiative to contact EMSD, we will consider taking disciplinary action, including temporary suspension of registration and even prosecution, against them in accordance with the Regulations. To avoid contravening the above regulation and being subject to disciplinary action by EMSD, the parties concerned should contact us in writing and update their postal addresses as soon as possible. 



Legal Knowledge



Installation Location for Flue Apertures of Gas Water Heaters

Court news: A registered gas installer has been convicted and fined at the Eastern Magistracy for failing to use the suitable provision in the premises to install a room-sealed gas water heater to serve a bathroom.

In this regard, we would like to remind all registered gas contractors and registered gas installers that in accordance with regulation 27(2) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations, where a suitable provision has been made in any premises, that suitable provision shall be used for the installation of a room-sealed gas water heater to serve a bathroom. Any person who contravenes the regulation commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine at level 3 (i.e. \$10,000) and to imprisonment for 3 months.

According to regulation 35A of the Building (Planning) Regulations, "suitable provision" means an adequate aperture in an external wall, to the satisfaction of the Building Authority, to provide direct access to the external air in respect of a room-sealed gas water heater which is or may be installed, and which aperture is capable of being sealed with a readily removable cover when a room-sealed gas water heater is not installed.

Please note that the location of the "suitable provision"



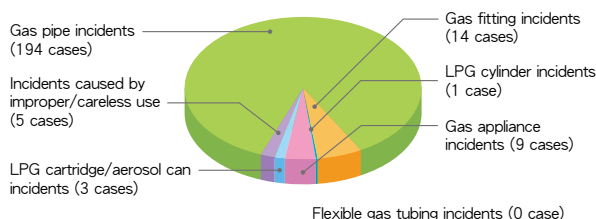
has been determined taking into consideration the design of all aspects of the building, and is in compliance with the relevant ordinances, regulations and guidelines. Hence, unauthorised modification of the location of a gas water heater flue aperture may contravene the law and may lead to the return of the gas water heater's exhaust fumes to the room or other parts of the premises, posing dangers to life and property. Therefore, trade members should comply with the relevant regulation stated above when installing gas water heaters in order to ensure gas safety. 🔥

Latest Update

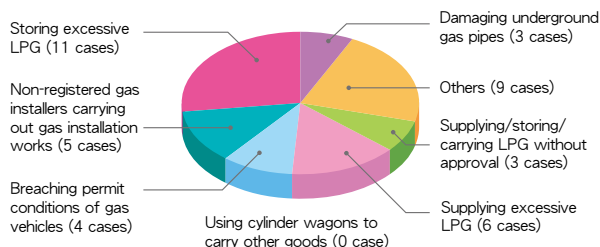
The Gas Safety Portal developed by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department was officially launched in May 2013. It offers safety tips, a learning corner, a game zone and useful information for the public. You are welcome to visit the website (<http://www.gsp.emsd.gov.hk>) to find out more. 🔥

Gas Incident and Prosecution Statistics

Gas Incidents by Type in 2012 (January to December)



Prosecutions by Type for LPG-related Cases in 2012 (January to December)



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