

Title: Contractor responsibilities when disconnecting and reconnecting gas cooking appliances fitted with a bayonet fitting, or other self-sealing connectors

Date issued: 1 April 2009

Formerly TB 229

This Technical Bulletin provides guidance to trades people on who is permitted to disconnect and reconnect a self-sealing connector (or bayonet fitting) serving a gas cooker, where for example, appliances are disconnected and reconnected by other trades as part of a property refurbishment, or by a removal and/or storage company

Introduction

The debate around who is permitted to disconnect and reconnect a self-sealing connector (or bayonet fitting) serving a gas cooker has led to different opinions being offered e.g. where appliances are disconnected and reconnected by other trades as part of a property refurbishment, or by a removal and/or storage company. The aim of this Technical Bulletin is to clarify the requirements of the relevant legislation, to ensure that any person involved in any kitchen refurbishment process or similar activities, is working within the requirements of the law see [Appendix 1 - Legislation](#) at the end of this Technical Bulletin for relevant Regulations and guidance).

Legislation

The primary legislation relevant to the installation and maintenance of gas appliances is the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR). This legislation, along with the Approved Code of Practice and Guidance – *Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances* (ACoP) – published by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (formerly published by the Health and Safety Commission (HSC)), describes what is considered ‘*work in relation to a gas fitting*’ (‘gas work’) and provides guidance on what needs to be considered when disconnecting and/or reconnecting any self-sealing appliance connector (see also [Appendix 1 - Legislation](#) at the end of this Technical Bulletin for relevant Regulations and guidance).

Where a gas cooker is installed for the first time or repositioned permanently, it is considered ‘gas work’ and must therefore be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer who holds the appropriate proof of competence.

The disconnection/reconnection (at the same location) of a self-sealing appliance connector following installation is not deemed ‘gas work’ and therefore may be carried out by a non-registered person(s), for example when a home owner temporarily removes the cooker when cleaning.

However, whenever **any** person who is **at work**, disconnects or re-connects a self-sealing connector they must be competent to a level that will ensure that the installation is not allowing gas to escape.

In most cases when the cooker hose is disconnected from the self-sealing connector, there will be a residual smell of gas. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that as a minimum, an appropriate leak detection fluid (LDF) or gas detector is used to confirm that there is no gas escaping from the fitting.

However, difficulty can arise where the position of the cooker remains unchanged, but the environment around the cooker is being affected by refurbishment work. Examples of this would be the installation of new kitchen cabinets/furniture or a replacement floor covering beneath the appliance. In these situations, it is likely that the cooker will need to be removed and re-connected, on one or more occasion(s), possibly by a person who is not Gas Safe registered but who will be subject to other legislative requirements and should be competent in undertaking this work.

General Health and Safety Requirements

It is important that contractors carrying out kitchen refurbishment work or similar, understand that they also have certain responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HSWA).

HSWA places duties on everyone concerned with work activities including employers, the self-employed and employees. It also includes provisions to protect members of the public. The duties apply both to individual people and to corporations, companies, partnerships, local authorities, etc.

The duties of HSWA are expressed in general terms and apply to a wide range of work activities and work situations.

Both employers and the self-employed are required to carry out their work so as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable that they do not expose people who are not their employees to health and safety risks (see section 3(1) and 3(2) of HSWA).

Note 1: *In some areas, the general duties of HSWA have been supplemented by specific requirements in regulations made under the Act e.g. GSIUR. Failure to comply with the general requirements of the Act, or with the specific requirements found elsewhere, may result in legal proceedings.*

Note 2: *Important factors to consider during a risk assessment of this type of work include for example, the duration of disconnection, the likelihood of the contractor leaving the area unattended, the risk of mechanical damage to the connector and the likelihood of others having access to the connector or work area.*

With the above legislation in mind, contractors carrying out refurbishment work, will need to have appropriate systems of work in place to manage and ensure the health, safety and welfare of any employees and the gas user during both the refurbishment and once the work has been completed. This will include ensuring the environment is safe whilst any work is undertaken, such as, from slips, trips and falls, but also that the work undertaken does not affect the on-going safety of any gas appliance or installation.

This places a responsibility on the person responsible for the overall control of the work e.g. a principal contractor, foreman, site manager or other person, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, compliance with **all** legislation is achieved.

Any decisions made by contractors with regard to refurbishment of a kitchen (or premises) must not affect the safe operation of any existing gas appliances or the installation as a whole.

An example of this would be when kitchen cabinets are to be replaced but the existing gas cooker and its position is to be retained. Although the gas cooker location is not to be altered, the new kitchen cabinets located either side and above the cooker will need to comply with either the gas cooker manufacturer's installation instructions or BS 6172⁽¹⁾.

Note 3: *If an extractor fan is also to be installed, the possible impact on any open-flued appliances also needs to be considered. For further guidance relating to the effect of extract fans, see TB 026 at: <https://engineers.gassaferegister.co.uk> - login and visit the Technical Information area.*

Therefore, it is the responsibility of any contractors to ensure that where any work is to be undertaken that may affect the safe operation of a gas appliance that they liaise closely with a registered business to ensure that during the entire refurbishment process, the safe operation of any gas appliance will not be compromised.

Conclusion

Where any alteration is to be made to premises that may affect the safe operation of a gas appliance/installation, the responsible person for that work needs to ensure that an appropriately gas-competent person (i.e. Gas Safe registered) is consulted. Such consultation is essential before any refurbishment work starts and may be required both during and after its completion. This will help to ensure that the gas appliance(s)/installation remain safe to be used.

Bibliography

(1) BS 6172 – *Installation and maintenance of domestic gas cooking appliances (2nd and 3rd family gases) — Specification*

-oOo-

Appendix 1

Legislation

The following requirements/guidance is taken from the GSIUR and the ACoP to the GSIUR (see **Legislation** in the main part of this Technical Bulletin).

Regulation 2 of GSIUR defines work as:

“work” in relation to a gas fitting includes any of the following activities carried out by any person, whether an employee or not, that is to say –

- a) installing or re-connecting the fitting;*
- b) maintaining, servicing, permanently adjusting, disconnecting, repairing, altering or renewing the fitting or purging it of air or gas;*
- c) where the fitting is not readily movable, changing its position; and removing the fitting.*

but the expression does not include the connection or disconnection of a bayonet fitting or other self-sealing connector.”

Guidance Note 24 to regulation 2 states:

“For the purpose of the definition of ‘work’, readily movable appliances include appliances such as laboratory Bunsen burners and mobile barbecues, which are readily portable. Other appliances, e.g. free-standing cookers connected by standard flexible hose, are not considered to be ‘readily movable’, but can be moved temporarily, e.g. to clean the space they normally occupy; this type of activity is not regarded as ‘work’ within the meaning of these Regulations. (Where an appliance is connected by means of a bayonet fitting, this will need to be disconnected before moving the appliance – such disconnection is also excluded from the definition of ‘work’, as is the connection or re-connection of this type of fitting. It may be necessary to detach a stability bracket; if so, this needs to be refitted when the appliance is returned to its original position). Where an appliance which is not readily movable is repositioned permanently, this is regarded as ‘work’ for the purpose of the Regulations.”

Regulation 6(3) of GSIUR states:

“Any person who disconnects a gas fitting shall, with the appropriate fitting, seal off every outlet of every pipe to which it is connected.”

Guidance Note 65 to regulation 6(3) of GSIUR states:

“When an appliance is disconnected and open-ended pipework is left, the pipework should always be left sealed with an appropriate fitting. A self-sealing coupling, e.g. on a cooker connection, does not need to be capped-off, except where there is a significant risk of interference (such as by a child). However, it should be checked that any disconnected coupling is not leaking gas (see paragraph 68), and any wall-mounted connector has been installed in the downward mounted position to prevent dirt or grit getting into the self-closing seal.”

Regulation 6(5) of GSIUR states:

“No person searching for an escape of gas shall use any source of ignition.”

Guidance Note 68 to regulation 6(5) of GSIUR states:

“The source of leaks should be located by sense of smell, gas detection instruments approved for use in flammable atmospheres, leak detection fluids, pressure test equipment or a combination of these methods.”

Regulation 8(1) of GSIUR states:

“No person shall make any alteration to any premises in which a gas fitting or gas storage vessel is fitted if that alteration would adversely affect the safety of the fitting or vessel in such a manner that, if the fitting or the vessel had been installed after the alteration, there would have been a contravention of, or failure to comply with, these Regulations.”

Guidance Note 82 to regulation 8(1) states:

“This regulation embraces a wide range of physical alterations to premises that might affect the safety of an existing gas fitting or gas storage vessel installed in the premises where the alteration is to be made (see paragraph 87). Before a significant alteration is made to premises where a gas appliance is installed, e.g. installation or removal of windows, air bricks, extractor fan units etc, any implications for gas appliance/fitting safety need to be properly addressed.”

Regulation 8(2) of GSIUR states:

“No person shall do anything which would affect a gas fitting or any flue or means of ventilation used in connection with the fitting in such a manner that the subsequent use of the fitting might constitute a danger to any person, except that this paragraph does not apply to an alteration to premises.”

Guidance Note 88 to regulation 8(2) states:

“This regulation applies to everyone, not just gas installers. It supplements regulation 8(1), by prohibiting other activities (i.e. except alteration to premises) which have the potential to compromise safety; this might for instance include modifications which cause blockage/obstruction of an air supply vent or flue, or incorrect installation of an air extraction or condensation control unit. As with regulation 8(1), it is essential for the implications of any such change or modification to be properly addressed, before work is commenced, to ensure that gas safety cannot be prejudiced in any way.”

Guidance Note 89 to regulation 8(2) states:

“Modification of any gas fitting should be made only by a competent person who is, or is employed by, a member of an HSE approved class of persons” (e.g. Gas Safe Register™ registered) “under regulation 3(3). Alterations not comprising ‘work’ on a gas fitting but which nevertheless may affect gas safety, e.g. a change to room ventilation provisions, should also be made only by a person with the required competence. Similarly, any significant modification needs to be checked by a competent person before the gas fitting concerned is taken into use, to ensure that appropriate standards have been met and safety has not been compromised (see regulation 26(9)).”

Note 4: For relevant legislation applicable to the Isle of Man, reference should be made to the – Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 1996 and applied by the Gas Safety (Application) Order 1996.

-o0o-