

HORIZON HOUSING ASSOCIATION	MAINTENANCE POLICY
TITLE	GAS APPLIANCE ANNUAL SERVICING
DATE OF APPROVAL	MAY 2008
DATE OF REVIEW	MAY 2011

1. AIM

This document sets out the Association's policy for administering the Gas Safety Inspections.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Association complies with its legal obligations in relation to the gas appliance inspections..

3. SCOPE

The policy applies to all of the Association's properties containing a gas supply. This will include the identification of appliances, servicing and recording of the service.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The legislation governing the issue of gas safety is "the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) regulations 1998". This current legislation came into force on 31 October 1998 and placed certain duties on installers, landlords and some gas suppliers. These regulations aim to prevent injury to consumers and the public from either carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning or fire explosion.

As a landlord we have a duty to ensure that the gas appliances and flues provided for our tenants' use are maintained in a safe condition at all times and are checked for safety every 12 month period by a CORGI registered installer. We are also required to provide a copy of the check for the tenant. The record must be kept for a minimum of 2 years. Failure to comply with the legislation is an offence, unless we can show that we have taken "reasonable steps" to prevent that contravention.

DEFINITION

Our definition of a gas appliance includes gas boilers, gas cookers and hobs.

5. SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTOR

- 5.1** We will ensure that we appoint a competent contractor who will carry out the duties required by regulation on our behalf.

We will further ensure that the appointed contractor represents value for money by effective procurement methods. To this effect, we will consider different types of procurement, including competitive tendering and partnering.

5.2 Annual Contract & Service Requirements

Our regulator, The Scottish Housing Regulator, expects us to obtain 100% access to all our properties within the 12 month period for gas inspections. To this end we will ensure that we follow “due process” in our attempts to gain access to tenants’ homes. In order to achieve this we will:

- Ensure good communication with tenants on the importance of gas safety inspections;
- Have good information and management systems, including information sharing with contractors, to allow accurate monitoring or progress with inspections;
- Have clear and effective procedures for gaining access when this is refused by the tenant or when there is no response from the tenant;
- Ensure good working practices between housing services staff on access issues, voids, abandonments or any other issue which may require a gas installation check to be carried out;
- In exceptional cases and where there is imminent danger to persons or property, we will force entry to the property for the purposes of essential maintenance. Otherwise where we have been unable to gain entry within the 12 month period we will seek legal advice in relation to forced entry for annual checks. Where advised, we will NOT seek forced entry, unless a court order has been obtained for this purpose.

6. MONITORING

- 6.1 We will carry out sample checks on the gas safety files at regular intervals to ensure our procedure is being applied and the necessary logging and documentation is valid.
- 6.2 In addition, we will require that our contractor carries out quality control checks on a minimum of 5% of service checks.
- 6.3 We will also instruct an independent contractor to attend a further 10% of those services for the purpose of quality control. This check will also take account of the range and type of gas equipment installed.
- 6.4 Tenants will also be asked their views on the contractor’s performance to assess the time on site, the level of competence instilled and the courtesy shown.

6.5 Housing Services Sub Committee will receive quarterly reports on progress against the planned servicing programme, access difficulties and any concerns over the performance of the contractor that has been identified during the monitoring listed above.

7. OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES OF SAFETY CHECKS

7.1 Mutual Exchanges

When a mutual exchange of properties takes place between two tenants, a gas safety check will be carried out on our property immediately prior to the exchange date.

This is to ensure the property is safe. The check will be arranged regardless of when the last annual service was undertaken.

7.2 Transfers

These will be treated as void properties.

7.3 Voids

We will ensure that gas safety checks are carried out for all void properties prior to the new tenant moving in.

7.4 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years.