

## **Gas Safety Servicing and Maintenance – Procedure.**

### **Appointing a contractor.**

The Housing Manager will prepare Tender Documents or negotiate a contract 4 months before the expiry of the gas safety records for the previous year. Tenders should only be sought from companies registered with Construction Line.

The Housing Manager will hold a 'Pre – tender submission' meeting with all interested contractors to explain the tender and the requirements of Spitalfields Housing Association.

Following submission of Tenders references will be checked and a further pre appointment meeting will be held with contractors who appear to demonstrate value for money, technical and administrative competence and have good references. These will be checked before hand.

### **Pre Appointment meeting.**

At the pre appointment meeting the Housing Manager will:-

Provide a schedule of names, addresses and telephone numbers and gas appliances for the properties covered by the contract.

Discuss, agree and record contact names and telephone numbers for both organisations , including fax or email details where these are to be used.

Discuss, agree and record details of the number of engineers and administrators who will be assigned to work on delivering the requirements of the contract.

Discuss, agree and record engineer qualifications and request original corgi cards and qualification certificates for each engineer.

Discuss, agree and record start dates, duration of contract and completion dates. The contractor will be requested to provide a project plan for carrying out the works. Including a diary of appointments for planned first appointments and the number of services to be attempted per day.

Discuss, agree the specification of contract and tender document.

Discuss and agree schedule prices for follow up works.

Discuss agree and record follow up work procedures in line with SHA policy.

Provide a copy of the SHA Gas Safety Policy and Procedures and standard letters ( including translated materials) to be discussed and usage agreed.)

Request a copy of the Contractors calling card. Check that the card complies with the specification requirements and discuss and agree translation of the card.

Request a copy of Contractors Gas Safety Record and agree usage.

Discuss, agree and record access procedures, in line with SHA policy.

Discuss, agree and record dangerous and at risk appliance procedures in line with SHA policy and Gas Safety Regulations.

Discuss agree and record invoice procedures and return of Gas Safety Records in line with SHA policy.

Discuss, agree and record dates of contact meetings to take place whilst the contract is in progress.

Discuss any local details which may help the contractor in relation to completion of the contract including particular problems with appliances and matters relating to cultural sensitivity .

Discuss organisational culture and general expectations.

If the Housing Manager is satisfied on all of these counts an appointment letter will be sent to the contractor.

### **Qualification Records**

Once qualification records have been obtained for all engineers who will work on SH A properties the M.O will maintain an Engineer Qualification data base which will include copies of certificates and CORGI registration cards for each engineer that is to operate on SHA properties.

The HM or MO will check all qualifications with CORGI prior to the commencement of the contract to ensure that the qualifications are authentic and up to date.

Companies are expected to demonstrate that their engineers have ACS qualifications or that they are working towards them. ACOP qualifications are only valid until Aug 2003.

### **Contract Monitoring.**

As previously detailed in Appointing a Contractor The HM will obtain a project plan from the contractor for carrying out the works. This will include a diary of events and a schedule showing planned first appointments.

During the works the HM and Contractor Representative will attend up to 4 contract progress meetings to discuss problems and progress. ( see Specification p21.)

Variations to the contract will be agreed by the HM on a standard variation order or in signed minutes

If difficulties arise in the execution of the works the HM will follow the procedure outlined in P21 –22 of the Specification to arrest any difficulties with performance.

## **Access Procedure – Annual Servicing.**

Spitalfields Housing Association ultimately bears responsibility for gaining access to its properties to carry out annual Gas Safety Checks and Servicing.

### **Access : stage 1:-**

SHA will provide a schedule of SHA properties with Tenant names, addresses and telephone numbers( where possible) to the contractor appointed to carry out the works.

The Contractor will pre arrange access to the property first by telephone and then in writing with the tenant. (letter 1.)

They will arrange the nearest convenient date and time, within normal working hours ( Mon – Fri 8-6) at which to attend at the property. Access should only be arranged with a member of the household who is over 16 and should wherever possible be agreed by the tenant or member of household.

If the Contractor is late for the appointment or due to un-foreseen circumstances cannot attend the appointment they are obliged to contact the tenant and repeat the process in stage 1.

In the event of no access being provided by the tenant the contractor will drop a no access card which will give the following information:-

- Contractors name and contact address/ telephone number
- Information advising the tenant that the Contractor is performing gas safety checks and servicing for SHA.
- Date and time call was arranged for.
- Actual time of visit.
- Request to contact Contractor within 48 Hours to arrange a further appointment.

Where the tenant has not contacted the contractor within 48 Hours to rearrange the appointment with them, the contractor, will within a further 24 hours, provide details by fax or email of the properties that they have not gained access to. This will be provided to the HMO or in their absence the HM.

The procedure will then progress to through stage 2, 3 and 4. At any stage an appointment may be made and agreed with the contractor. In each case where the contractor attends an appointment which is not kept by the tenant they will be obliged to inform the Officer who arranged the appointment within 24 hours by Fax or email.

### **Access ; Stage 2.**

Upon receipt of the list of properties the HMO will, within 3 days of receipt send out a standard letter to the tenant. ( letter 2). A copy of the letter will be retained for reference.

The MO will record the date by which the tenant should contact to arrange a further appointment for a safety check and service. This date should be 14 days hence.

Where tenants contact in response to this letter. The MO will liaise with the Contractor to secure an acceptable , mutually agreed appointment time.

Where the tenant does not contact by the 14<sup>th</sup> day or where a pre arranged appointment is missed the MO will pass a list to the H/O of those tenants who have not contacted to arrange appointments.

### **Access Stage 3**

The H/O will send out a letter to the tenant (letter 3) within 48 Hours of receiving the list of tenants who have not contacted to arrange an appointment for a Gas Safety Check or Service.

If the tenant does not contact within 48 Hours of the letter being sent out. The H/O will telephone the tenant and will attempt to arrange the appointment directly with the tenant.

Where this is not successful the H/O will visit the Tenants home and attempt to arrange an appointment with them and the contractor on site.

Where this fails and/or the appointment arranged is not kept by the tenant the H/O will send letter 4, informing the tenant that legal proceedings are commencing and or that the Association proposes to interrupt the gas supply to the property by ‘ blanking off or disking off‘ the gas supply. Where the meter is located externally or in a communal area accessible to SHA officers this will be arranged by the MO within a further 48 hours but will only be done where the gas safety certificate is one month or more out of date.

NB Where access to service and check gas appliances proves difficult it is justified to blank off the supply under The Gas Safety Regulations 1998 , Regulation 34 which states

‘ The responsible person for any property shall not use a gas appliance or permit a gas appliance to be used if at any time he knows or has reason to suspect that it cannot be used without constituting a danger to any person’

- responsible user means the occupier or the owner of the premises or any person with authority for the time being to take appropriate action in relation to any gas fitting therein.
- Blanking off is the placing of a special brass disk in one of the unions of the gas meter, when fitted, visually the meter installation looks normal but it prevents gas from getting into the internal supply. It has been the standard practice of the gas industries for the interruption of gas supplies.

Where it is not possible because the meter is located internally the HO will prepare court papers to pass to the Housing Manager. They will also prepare a short report showing any details of vulnerability, mental health, absence, subletting, etc.

#### **Access Stage 4**

- Where the procedure for stage 3 has failed the Housing Manager will approve cases referred for Court action and will discuss the issues of access with the Housing Officer.
- Stage 5 – Court Proceedings.

#### **Dangerous appliances – safeguarding life and property. Contractors Obligations.**

The Contractor is obliged to notify the Association immediately by Fax or agreed email where they judge an appliance to be an **IMMEDIATE DANGER** or an **AT RISK**. (These procedures are contained in the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998) The notification should be addressed to the Housing Maintenance Officer, Housing Manager or Chief Executive.

#### **Immediate Danger – Contractors Obligations**

They are required to carry out the following actions where they find an appliance to be an Immediate Danger. ID.

Immediate Danger is defined as an appliance which if left operational or connected to a gas supply is an immediate danger to life or property.

This may be an installation that fails:-

- A soundness test
- A Spillage test
- Has a serious flue, ventilation or combustion defect.

If the defect cannot be rectified at the time of visit the operative will must carry out the following:-

- Advise the tenant that the appliance is dangerous to use and of the need to disconnect the appliance.
- With the initial permission of the Tenant they should disconnect the appliance. Where disconnection is refused by the tenant they are obliged to make immediate contact with the TRANSCO.

The tenant should be advised by SHA that they are not the 'Responsible User' of the appliance and that SHA can insist that the appliance is disconnected.

In all instances other those where there is a risk of physical violence, the operative should be asked to disconnect the appliance.

- Attach a DO NOT USE sticker.

- Complete a WARNING NOTICE which the tenant must sign and give a copy to the Landlord and Tenant.

### **Immediate Danger ; Landlords Obligations**

Once notified of a dangerous appliance which has been disconnected because it presents an immediate danger the following actions should be carried out by the Maintenance Officer:-

#### **GAS FIRES**

The Tenant should be visited by the MO within 2 working days to discuss follow up works.

Wherever possible the tenant should be encouraged to opt for replacement of the gas fire with a larger or additional radiator.

Where the tenant refuses this option the gas fire may be replaced.

The M/O should authorise additional works up to a value of £500.00 to an approved Gas Safety Contractor on a Routine Priority. .Where the works exceed £500.00 the M/O should seek 3 Competitive Quotes for the work and present these for approval by the Housing Manager.

A repairs Order should be raised on Omni ledger and the Gas Safety Record Data Base should be updated in each case to show that follow up works have been requested.

#### **BOILERS**

Wherever possible – if a boiler has to be replaced it should be replaced with a room sealed appliance.

The M/O should authorise additional works to a Gas Safety Contractor on an Urgent Priority up to a value of £500.00. Where the works exceed £500.00 the M/O should seek 3 Competitive Quotes for the work and present these for approval by the Housing Manager.

A repairs Order should be raised on Omni ledger and the Gas Safety Record Data Base should be updated in each case to show that follow up works have been requested.

### **At Risk Appliances – Contractors Obligations**

An **AT RISK** appliance is one which if used could lead to a situation which could create a risk to life or property.

Again the Contractor should wherever possible rectify the defect and make the appliance safe to use at the time of the visit.

If this is not possible they must:-

- Advise the tenant and the Landlord that the appliance is AT RISK and should not be used.
- With the tenant permission turn off the appliance at the isolation valve.
- Attach a DO NOT USE sticker.
- Complete a WARNING NOTICE which the tenant must sign and give a copy to the landlord and the tenant.

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#### **Sub standard appliances or follow up repairs.**

This Procedure should be followed where the appliance is found to be of a sub standard nature or where normal follow up maintenance is required.

Details of follow up repairs required or substandard appliances should be forwarded to SHA with the monthly gas safety records and service sheets or more quickly where this is appropriate and is agreed in the pre appointment meeting.

For works under £500.00 follow up repairs orders should be raised by the M/O to a Gas Safety Contractor.

For works above £500.00, 3 competitive quotes should be sought by the M/O and works should be approved by the Housing Manager.

All follow up repairs orders should be raised on Omni ledger by the HMO and the Gas Safety Record should be updated.

### **Keeping Appropriate Records – Gas Safety Data Base**

On receipt of a Gas Safety sheet, extra information sheet or warning notice the HMO should input and check for accuracy

1. The date the service and safety check was carried out
2. The name of the engineer and company who completed the check .
3. The correct appliance model and make ( this may change from time to time as appliances are replaced.)
4. All follow up repairs or queries of which we have been advised.

### **Gas Safety Sheets – What to Check for.**

On receipt of Gas Safety Record Sheets the HMO will check each sheet for the following:-

1. That the certificate if not a CORGI or CP12 Document complies with the Current Gas Safety Regulations.
2. That each section of the sheet has been properly completed and dated and is legible. The HMO should be able to read all of the details clearly and should be able to identify the correct signature of the engineer.
3. That the certificate has been completed by an engineer of whom SHA holds valid, up to date qualification records and who it has been agreed will be used to service SHA's Gas appliances.
4. The HMO should pay particular attention to any apparent irregularities in the operating pressure, details of the spillage test and details of the gas soundness test.
5. The HMO should also monitor how many visits the engineer completes in a day. If it goes above 8 it should be queried and reported to the HM.
- 6.

Any discrepancies should be reported to the HM to discuss with the Contractor. The Housing Manager will follow up all such discrepancies

### **Tenants Appliances**

Though Spitalfields H.A is not responsible for Tenants Cookers or for Gas Fires or Boilers which the tenant has installed as an improvement it is good practice to advise tenants of any potential dangers or risks they may face in respect of their responsibilities.

In each case where SHA receives advice regarding the safety of a tenants gas appliance the HMO will follow the following procedure:-

1. Send a standard letter to the tenant advising of the fault and advising of their requirement to rectify it.( Sample Letter 1- Tenants cookers)
2. Keep a record of all copy letters sent to tenants about the safety of their own appliances.
3. After one year check to see whether the fault has been rectified.
4. Where the fault has not been rectified inform the Housing Manager
5. The tenant may then be advised that we intend to carry out this work and that they will be expected to pay for it. Actions will be considered on an individual basis and will only be taken where it is clear that the tenants payment will be forthcoming.

### **Refusal of Tenant Consent.**

SHA is the responsible user of gas appliances in its properties which belong to it. This does not cover cookers which are the tenants own responsibility and may not cover some gas appliances if the tenant has installed these themselves as an improvement. It is therefore ultimately SHA who is authorised to give permission to disconnect and turn off appliances.

In the interests of customer service however, the tenants permission should be routinely sought to disconnect or turn off appliances and only where this is refused should the higher authority of SHA be sought.

If a situation arises where the tenant, advised by SHA of its higher authority in this regard, still refuses to comply with the procedure TRANSCO should be contacted by the HMO or other officer to utilise its powers to stop supply of gas to the property In each case the relevant officer should request a job reference number.

### **Void Properties and Gas Safety.**

When a property becomes void the HMO will:-

1. Check that there is a current Gas Safety Record for the property – where this Record is due to reach its 12 month expiry within a further period of 3 months the HMO will arrange for a full safety check and service of all Landlord Gas appliances, followed by Disking Off or Blanking off the supply to avoid interference.
2. Where there is a current Safety Record that has over 3 months before it is due to expire the HMO will arrange for the supply to the property to be disked off or blanked off only.

### **Re – letting properties and Gas Safety.**

1. When a property is re – let to a new tenant , the H/O will provide the tenant with a valid copy of the Gas Safety Record. The tenant will be requested to sign to say they have received this record and this will be placed on the tenants file with the other letting papers.
2. The M/O will on notification from the H/o arrange for the gas supply to the property to be re instated.

### **Gas Safety Budget Monitoring**

Following award of contract The Housing Manager should discuss details of the remaining budget for follow up works with the Chief Executive, Finance Manager and Housing Maintenance Officer.

The Housing Manager will monitor follow up repairs in accordance with a realistic set budget. Any excess expenditure above budget will be discussed with SMT.

### **Auditing Gas Safety Works.**

It is recommended that Spitalfields H.A opts to externally audit 10 % of its Gas safety works on a bi annual basis.

### **Appendix**

- Access Letters 1, 2, 3, 4.
- Tenants own appliance Letter 1.
- Warning Notice.

### **Useful Telephone Numbers**

- CORGI ( for checking qualifications of engineers and other matters) - 01256372200
- CORGI ( for obtaining CORGI labels and stationary) – 0870 5168111/ Fax 01276 609102
- TRANSCO ( for reporting appliances which present an immediate danger or at risk)-0800111999.