

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY



Gas Boilers with Concealed Flues

Introduction

Following a number of cases of carbon monoxide poisonings in recent years, the Health & Safety Executive introduced new requirements for the inspection of concealed gas appliance flues.

Some properties, mainly flats and apartments, have been built with boiler flues (waste gas pipes) which cannot be inspected because they are hidden behind walls or ceilings.

If you do have a gas boiler where all, or part of, the flue cannot be seen, you, or for rented properties your landlord, will need to arrange for inspection hatches to be fitted.

This does not mean that your flue system is suddenly unsafe. As long as the boiler passes a series of safety checks – including having audible carbon monoxide alarms fitted in the living area – it can be used normally for the time being.

The new requirements will allow property owners until the 31st December 2012 to fit small inspection hatches.

From January 2013, registered gas engineers will be required to condemn as unsafe and turn off any gas boiler which has a concealed flue that cannot be inspected – even if the boiler is not defective.

What does this mean for me?

Q. Is Your Property Affected?

A. If your gas boiler is fitted to an **outside** wall (this is the case for the majority of properties), then it is likely that the boiler vents direct to fresh air, and you will not be affected by the new requirements. You should, however, still ensure that you get your gas appliances serviced and certified every year by a Gas Safe Registered contractor (see below).

If your gas boiler is fitted to an **internal** wall, it is likely that the flue

(waste gas pipe) will run through ceiling voids in your property to a vent on an external wall. **If this is the case, the following information is very important and you must take action.**

If you are at all unsure whether your property contains a concealed flue, you should instruct a Gas Safe registered contractor to confirm one way or the other.

Q. Does your apartment have its own gas supply?

A. If the answer is yes, you may have a concealed flue (waste gas pipe) that runs through wall or ceiling voids before venting to fresh air away from the gas boiler.

If the flue has not been correctly installed, or it develops a fault, there is a risk that carbon monoxide gas could escape into your property.

Carbon monoxide is an odourless gas which can cause poisoning. Symptoms can include: headaches, nausea, fatigue and loss of consciousness. In severe cases it can result in death.

Q. What steps should I take?

A. These new requirements recommend that property owners to fit small hatches in the walls and/or ceilings of their properties which allow the concealed flue to be inspected along its full length.

If your property contains a concealed flue, you should contact a Gas Safe registered contractor (previously known as CORGI) to advise on whether inspection hatches are required, and if so where they need to be positioned.

If inspection hatches are required, a competent building contractor should be able to fit them. However it is important that the contractor liaises with the Gas Safe engineer so that the hatches are positioned as required.

As a precautionary measure it is recommended that you install

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a carbon monoxide (CO) gas detector within your property. However, it remains a requirement to fit inspection hatches.

Remember the new requirements mean that property owners have to fit inspection hatches by the **31st December 2012**.

Q. How much will inspection hatches cost?

A. It will vary from property to property. Inspection hatches should be at least 300mm x 300mm and wherever possible, be positioned within 1.5m of any joint in the flue system. Therefore, some properties will only need one while others may need more.

Basic inspection hatches must comply with the Building Regulations and are likely to cost from around £75. Building contractors will also charge for the fitting of the inspection hatches.

Landlord Responsibilities

If you are a landlord with a rented property, you will already be aware that you have a specific legal duty to carry out annual inspections of all gas appliances.

If your rental property contains a concealed flue, it is therefore essential that steps are taken to fit inspection hatches before the **31st December 2012**. After this date any inspections of gas appliances will result in them being condemned unless the hatches are fitted. It is also strongly recommended that carbon monoxide detectors are fitted.

If you are a tenant of a flat which contains a concealed flue (waste gas pipe), you should liaise with your landlord to enable and ensure inspection hatches are fitted. You should also ensure that a carbon monoxide detector is fitted by your landlord.

What are Insero doing to help?

Our information leaflet is designed to help customers understand the requirements of the new Health & Safety Executive requirements.

As this is an issue which affects individual properties rather than the common parts of properties, Insero are unable under the

lease, legislation and industry codes of practice to use service charge funds to pay for any work required within your home. It is therefore down to individual property owners to take the necessary steps.

Where can i find more information?

Gas Safe Register is the official gas registration body for the United Kingdom appointed by the relevant Health and Safety Authority for your area. Gas Safe Register replaced CORGI as the gas registration body in Great Britain on 1 April 2009.



- Further information can be found on the Gas Safe Register website www.gassaferegister.co.uk
- Specific information on concealed flues can be found using the following address:
www.gassaferegister.co.uk/advice/flues_in_voids.aspx
- There is also an extensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) section on the Gas Safe Register website which should be consulted:
www.gassaferegister.co.uk/advice/flues_in_voids/frequently_asked_questions.aspx
- Search for Gas Safe registered contractors in your area via the website, by calling them on 0800 408 5500 or emailing them on fluesinvoids@gassaferegister.co.uk

Gas Flues – A checklist

- Check whether gas boiler is on an internal wall or doesn't vent direct to the outside
- If yes, find out information on concealed gas flues on the Gas Safe Register website www.gassaferegister.co.uk
- Find a Gas Safe registered contractor in your area and contact them to arrange a visit
- H&S require inspection hatches to be fitted by **31st December 2012**

Contact Insero

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