

# What's being done about illegal gas work?

## What is illegal gas work?

Gas work is illegal if it has been carried out by someone who is not registered or qualified to do the work.

This can include people who have never been registered, those who have been registered in the past but are not currently registered, and those working outside the scope of their registration.

## What do I do if I find it?

If you come across work that you suspect has been carried out in your customer's home by an illegal gas worker, please encourage your customer to report it to Gas Safe Register. You can also report it yourself via your Gas Safe online account – click the Resource tab, then choose Illegal Gas Work.

If there are gas safety issues, make the installation safe in line with the current Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure, and then report it to Gas Safe Register. Gas Safe will make every effort to visit the site as quickly as possible, before any rectification work is done, to gather as much robust evidence as quickly as possible. When the evidence has been collated, you will be able to go back and bring the installation up to the required standard.

## Should I fix it?

Don't leave an unsafe gas installation – you must follow the latest Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure and make safe if required. If needed, add a 'Danger Do Not Use' label and warning notice to make it clear to the householder that they must not use the dangerous gas fitting.

However, do not put right the illegal gas work before Gas Safe Register has inspected it. Where necessary, make safe, but try to preserve as much of the evidence as possible so that Gas Safe can inspect and report to the appropriate authorities. This helps enforcement agencies make an informed assessment of how unsafe the gas installation was, giving them a greater opportunity to demonstrate the level of danger in any subsequent prosecution.

## You can make a real difference

Some of the information that Gas Safe receives about illegal gas workers comes from consumers, but it's vital that gas engineers report work that they suspect has been done illegally. Below are two examples of dodgy fitters who were brought to justice – thanks to registered businesses who reported what they had found to Gas Safe Register.

### Dodgy work was a risk to life

An illegal fitter from Hertfordshire was jailed for 12 months, thanks to information that a law-abiding registered business gave to Gas Safe Register. The fake fitter had serviced gas appliances at a hotel and restaurant, and left a gas wok range that was so dangerous that it was an immediate risk to life and property.

He had deliberately misled customers by fraudulently using the details of a genuine gas engineer, and used the Gas Safe logo on his clothing and vehicles.

He had ignored an HSE warning not to carry out gas work without gaining the necessary competencies and registration. He pleaded guilty to six breaches under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and went to prison.

### Jail for moonlighting fake fitter

A fake fitter from Cambridgeshire spent 16 months in prison for carrying out unsafe gas work – following information provided by a registered engineer. A joint investigation by the HSE and local Trading Standards found the tradesperson had been moonlighting, buying gas boilers through his employer's account, installing them on the side and pocketing the money.

He was not registered when he carried out the gas work, which was found to be unsafe. He was prosecuted and sent to jail for breaches of the gas safety regulations and unfair trading regulations.

## Gary Russell, Regional Investigations Officer, says:

"Registered gas engineers provide crucial information to Gas Safe Register regarding illegal gas work – and we encourage you to do so. The more illegal gas workers we can remove from our industry, the more beneficial it will be to us all. Getting rid of illegal gas workers will have a financial benefit to your business, as well as strengthening the reputation of all registered gas engineers."

## What happens next?

The HSE will review the report and decide on the most appropriate enforcement action, in line with its Enforcement Policy. Enforcement action may result in:

- a Warning Letter: the first stage of enforcement
- a Prohibition Notice: this orders the worker to stop working on gas immediately
- Prosecution: this may result in a fine and/or imprisonment of up to six months in the Magistrate's Court and/or up to two years in the Crown Court.

**Note:** Gas Safe Register does not undertake prosecutions: this is the role of enforcement agencies including the HSE.

## What will Gas Safe Register do?

You can report illegal gas work anonymously if you want to. But if you have provided your details, Gas Safe will contact you to acknowledge receipt and discuss your concerns.

Gas Safe will attempt to contact your customer to offer help. If your customer allows it, Gas Safe will attend the site, usually within 10 working days, to undertake a complaint investigation.

When the investigation has been completed, Gas Safe will provide a comprehensive report to your customer and to the HSE. The report may also be disclosed to other agencies, if appropriate, such as local authority Environmental Health, or Trading Standards.

## How to report illegal gas work

If you find work that you suspect has been carried out illegally, report it by signing into your online account at <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/sign-in> click the Resource tab, then choose Illegal Gas Work. You can also call 0800 408 5577.

**Gas Safe Register has investigated nearly 5,000 illegal gas jobs in recent years; finding that 3 in 5 were in an unsafe condition. 1 in 5 were so dangerous that the appliance had to be disconnected immediately.**