

Landlords' gas safety checks and records

Gas Safe Register technical officers Ronnie McFarlane and Jon Palmer set out the details of what gas engineers must carry out during a landlord's gas safety check, what's best practice, and how to fill in the record correctly.

Landlords' gas safety records have become all-encompassing because they try to capture lots of information for a variety of different situations. In this article, we answer some of the common questions that gas engineers ask Gas Safe Register's Technical Team.

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR) give guidance on the minimum information that should be recorded and what tests should be undertaken.

What information must be recorded on the gas safety record?

- The date on which the appliance or chimney/flue was checked
- The address of the premises
- The name and address of the landlord or agent at which the appliance or chimney/flue are installed
- A description of the location of each appliance or chimney/flue that has been checked
- Any defect identified, and any remedial action taken. This record must be retained until two further checks of the appliance or chimney/flue have been made or, if an appliance or flue has been removed from the premises, the record must be kept for a period of two years from the date of the last check
- Confirmation that the safety check complies with (but is not limited to) Regulation 26(9) of GSIUR
- Your name and signature
- Your Gas Safe registration number.

What checks do I need to do?

GSIUR clearly states the minimum work that must be carried out during a landlord's gas safety check and the information that must be captured so that the check complies with the regulations.

Within the regulations, 26(9) sets out the checks that you must carry out:

- Visual inspection of the gas

Regulation 36 of the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR) covers the duties of a landlord regarding the gas safety of appliances. It's important to note that the onus is on the landlord to ensure that any landlord's gas safety record contains all the relevant information and that it is completed on time. This is not the gas engineer's responsibility.

You can find more information about landlords' responsibilities in Technical Bulletin 055: Duties of Landlords, just sign into your Gas Safe Register online account at www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk/sign-in

installation, appliance(s) location, terminal, chimney/flue route/position and signs of incomplete combustion

- Appliance burner pressure or gas rate, or both where necessary
- Combustion gas analysis where specified in the appliance manufacturer's servicing and maintenance instructions
- Ventilation is clear and sufficiently sized, etc
- Flue flow and spillage testing where appropriate for correct operation of flue
- All flame supervision devices and/or other safety controls for correct operation
- Investigate any evidence of unsafe operation of appliances. You must take all reasonable steps to notify any defects to the landlord or responsible person. If the appliance is supplied with LPG, you should notify the gas supplier, and in any other cases you should notify the transporter.

What other checks should be carried out?

Gas Safe Register recommends that you should carry out a tightness test, although this is not a legal requirement.

You should also check the gas meter/emergency control valve for accessibility in an emergency, for maintenance and for correct labelling.

What about gas appliances that are not provided by the landlord?

If gas appliance(s) belong to the tenant not the landlord, you should give them a visual check only. The most common example is a cooker because not all landlords supply a cooking appliance. An appliance that is owned by the tenant is not the landlord's responsibility.

What if an appliance fails the safety check?

The safety check record will contain details of any gas safety defect identified and the remedial action taken. Landlords must ensure that any gas safety defect is rectified (by a Gas Safe registered engineer) before the equipment is used again. It is recommended that they keep copies of work done to rectify defects identified by the safety check.

How do I record defects?

You should only record defects that are gas safety issues on the gas safety record. These are situations that are classified as At Risk or Immediately Dangerous, in accordance with the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (IGEM/G/11).

Defects that are not related to gas safety should be communicated via a job report or invoice but NOT added to the

defects on the gas safety record. This is because doing so could potentially confuse the responsible person over what is safe and what is unsafe.

Can I still complete the record if an appliance is AR or ID?

A LGSR is NOT a certificate: it is a record of your findings when you attended that property and should always be issued. You must complete the record to state whether the appliance/s are safe to use or not, and any gas safety defects that the landlord must address.

Do I need to complete a new record if I fit a new appliance?

No. If a gas safety record is currently in place covering the existing landlord's appliances, the record is still valid.

As an example, let's say the landlord has a boiler, cooker and a fire in a rented property. All appliances are owned by the landlord, so they are covered under Regulation 36.

The gas safety record check was completed in January but the landlord asks you to fit a new boiler in March. When you install the new appliance, you have a duty of care to carry out a visual inspection on the other gas appliances in that property, as per the table opposite, to ensure their safe operation:

After installing the boiler, the property's cooker and fire are due to be tested and checked the following January, and the boiler in March. However, GSIUR does provide one-off flexibility to re-align the safety check the following January, with all three appliances on the same record.

Note: This can only apply to one appliance and the maximum time that the safety check can be extended is two months.

How often should installation pipework be maintained?

Landlords have a duty to maintain the gas pipework in their

Minimum visual checks to ensure compliance

Checks required	An appliance is encountered while working on another appliance	An appliance forming part of a tightness test	An appliance, when purging the system of air and relighting, following work elsewhere on the installation
Location	✓	✓	✓
Flueing	✓	✓	✓
Ventilation	✓	✓	✓
Signs of distress	✓	✓	✓
Stable/secure	✓	✓	✓
Flame picture		*	✓

✓ = Required
* = Considered best practice

Source: IGEM/G/11, Table 3

properties. This is a separate and distinct duty from the annual safety check but can and should be undertaken at the same time.

There is no formal or legal requirement to keep pipework maintenance records. However, landlords would need to prove, if asked, that they have regularly maintained installation pipework from the meter – or emergency control valve in the case of an LPG installation – to the appliance, and have completed any required repairs.

What if I can't gain access to carry out a gas safety check?

HSE has set out guidance on Gas Safe Register's website to help landlords understand what may be considered reasonable steps to take to demonstrate compliance with their duties to have gas appliances checked annually during the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes examples of what to do if tenants deny access.

The law is flexible, and where it is not possible to carry out a gas safety check (due to tenants shielding or self-isolating), it will normally be sufficient for landlords

to demonstrate that they took reasonable steps to comply with the law by keeping records of communication with the tenant and details of attempts to gain access. Landlords should seek to arrange the safety check as soon as all parties are available.

In line with HSE's guidance, landlords (and local authorities alike) should consider the balance of risk presented by the gas system, with the risk to their tenant's health on a case-by-case basis. Their assessment should consider factors such as the age and type of appliance in a property, the previous maintenance/breakdown history, the date of last gas safety check and the presence of a carbon monoxide alarm.

What if I suspect there has been tampering or theft of gas?

If you believe a gas meter has been tampered with or there has been theft of gas, you must follow the guidance in IGEM/G/11 if you consider it to be a safety defect, and report it to the responsible person or landlord. ■



Keep the expiry date

Landlords can arrange for gas safety checks to be carried out any time 10-12 calendar months after the previous gas safety check, but still retain the original date as if the check had been carried out exactly 12 months after the previous check – much in the same way as car MOTs.

Note: The expiry date on a landlord's gas safety record must be preserved for 12 months, even when the check has been carried out earlier than this. The Register is aware that, in some instances, gas engineers carrying out a check a month before 12 months have elapsed are then incorrectly filling in the expiry date on 'next gas safety check due before' as just a month later, rather than 13 months ahead.

Gas Safe Register says: "Where the gas safety check is carried out less than 10 months or more than 12 months after the previous gas safety check, this will have the effect of 'resetting the clock' and the new deadline date will now be 12 months from the date of this latest gas safety check."

Some manufacturers of landlords' record pads include a facility to capture "next due date". There is no legal requirement for this date to be added to the record but if a landlord wishes it to be filled in with the following year's date, you should inspect the previous record to confirm the date on which last year's record was completed.

Landlords may still continue with their current regime of gas safety checking, as long as it meets the legal minimum requirements as set out in Regulation 36.