Gas Safety in Commercial Premises: A Practical Compliance Guide

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Why Gas Safety Matters in Commercial Premises

Gas appliances, pipework and flues feature in all sorts of commercial premises, from boiler rooms and commercial kitchens to warehouse heaters and church halls. Properly installed and maintained,

they are safe and reliable. Neglected, badly installed or interfered with, they can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning, fire or explosion, often with little warning beforehand.

As an employer, landlord or person in control of commercial premises, you carry a legal duty to manage these risks. That duty does not stop at having a boiler serviced once a year and filing the certificate away. It means understanding who is responsible for what, what a compliant arrangement looks like, and how to spot warning signs before they become an incident.

Who Is Legally Responsible

The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 set out the core duties for anyone who owns, manages or controls gas appliances, fittings and flues, including in non-domestic premises. Combined with the general duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the risk assessment requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the law expects you to identify what could go wrong with your gas installations and put sensible measures in place to prevent it.

Exactly who holds the duty depends on the arrangement. An employer or person in control of non-domestic premises must keep gas appliances, fittings and flues in a safe condition. In rented homes, landlords have separate duties to arrange annual gas safety checks and provide records. This matters particularly for housing associations and almshouse trusts managing communal boilers and heating systems across multiple properties, where responsibility for shared plant needs to be clearly documented rather than assumed, as we often see when supporting housing associations and almshouses with their wider compliance.

Where premises are let, responsibility for gas equipment depends on the terms of the lease and on who actually controls the appliances and the areas they serve. A tenant may take on appliances they own, but a landlord will often remain responsible for equipment they supply or control, such as a shared boiler serving several units. Assuming a tenant is managing something the landlord is still responsible for is an easy gap to miss, and a wider health and safety audit can bring it to light.

What a Compliant Gas Safety Arrangement Looks Like

A compliant arrangement goes well beyond an annual certificate. It needs a documented schedule of every gas appliance, pipework run and flue on site, each with a record of when it was last checked, by whom, and what was found. The law requires the installation to be kept in a safe condition, and in practice an annual check by a Gas Safe registered engineer is the usual way to show this, covering the appliance itself, the flue, ventilation and the gas supply pipework, and resulting in a written record.

Commercial kitchens often need more attention: a gas interlock system that cuts the supply if extraction fails is standard practice where ventilation is relied on, and heavy use may justify servicing more often than once a year. In settings where vulnerable people are present, gas safety needs to sit alongside wider fire and health and safety arrangements rather than being treated as a standalone task, something we look at closely when carrying out audits for care homes and similar settings.

Good practice also means reviewing the arrangement itself at least annually, not just the appliances. Has a new appliance been installed without being added to the schedule? Has a fault from last year's check actually been fixed, or just noted? Keep the records for as long as you operate the building, since a consistent paper trail is the best evidence of proper maintenance if anything is ever questioned.

Gas Safe Registration: Checking Your Engineer

Gas work on appliances in Great Britain must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer, and using anyone who is not registered is both dangerous and unlawful. Each registered engineer carries an ID card showing their registration number and the specific categories of gas work they are qualified to carry out, since registration is specific to the type of work rather than a blanket qualification.

Before any engineer starts work, check their ID card and confirm their registration covers the job in hand. The Gas Safe Register website lets you verify this independently in a couple of minutes, and it is worth doing every time, not just for a new contractor. A good management system records which engineer or firm carried out each check, along with their registration number, so it can be checked again later if needed.

Common Problems Found During Inspections

Engineers carrying out commercial gas safety checks tend to find the same handful of issues repeatedly, most of them entirely preventable with a properly managed maintenance regime rather than a single annual visit.

- Inadequate ventilation to appliances, often caused by air vents being blocked, painted over or covered during refurbishment
- Incorrectly positioned or deteriorating flues, including flues disturbed by other building work and never checked afterwards
- Corroded or damaged pipework, particularly in older buildings or where appliances have been relocated without reassessment
- Appliances well beyond their expected service life with no replacement plan in place
- Unauthorised modifications or repairs carried out by staff or contractors who are not Gas Safe registered
- Missing or incomplete maintenance records, making it impossible to demonstrate a consistent history of checks

Several of these point to the same underlying problem: gas safety treated as an isolated compliance task rather than part of how the building is managed day to day. A periodic health and safety audit that looks at how maintenance, refurbishment and gas safety checks are coordinated can help identify these gaps before they cause harm.

Carbon Monoxide and Gas Leaks: Detection and Response

Carbon monoxide is produced when gas does not burn completely. It is colourless, odourless and tasteless, so it cannot be detected without the right equipment, and its early symptoms, including headaches, dizziness, nausea and confusion, are easily mistaken for tiredness or a minor illness. That is part of what makes it so dangerous.

Where your risk assessment shows a need, as it usually will near gas appliances, fit audible carbon monoxide alarms that meet the relevant British Standard, positioned according to the manufacturer's instructions rather than wherever is convenient. Alarms are a back-up, not a substitute for proper maintenance. Test them regularly and replace them before their end-of-life date, usually marked on the unit. Staff should also understand the symptoms of exposure as part of induction or refresher training, so unusual headaches or nausea in a particular part of the building get reported rather than dismissed.

What to Do If You Smell Gas

If anyone suspects a gas leak, the response should be immediate and well rehearsed rather than worked out on the spot. Evacuate the area, avoid operating electrical switches or naked flames, open windows and doors if it is safe to do so, and call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999 from a safe distance. Do not return to the premises until it has been confirmed safe.

This response should be written into your fire and emergency procedures and covered in staff induction, so everyone on site, not just facilities or maintenance staff, knows what to do.

Getting Support with Gas Safety Compliance

The installation, maintenance and repair work itself must be done by Gas Safe registered engineers. Where we help is in making sure the management arrangements around that work are sound, that checks happen at the right intervals, that records are complete and accessible, that responsibilities between landlords, tenants and employers are clearly understood, and that gas safety is properly built into your wider health and safety management rather than sitting in a filing cabinet.

Our health and safety consultancy service can review how your gas safety arrangements are managed and point out any gaps in your records and responsibilities, our auditing service can check this alongside your wider compliance picture, and our competent person service gives you ongoing access to advice when questions come up. We work with organisations across Leicestershire and the wider East Midlands. Contact us to talk through your current gas safety arrangements.

Talk to Integral Safety Ltd

We are health and safety consultants based in Coalville, Leicestershire, working with businesses across the East Midlands. If anything in this guide applies to your workplace, we can help.

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This guide is general information about UK health and safety law and practice, correct as at 11 November 2026. It is not advice on your particular circumstances. The latest version is at https://integralsafetyltd.co.uk/blog/gas-safety-in-commercial-premises-essential-requirements.