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Gas Certificates Explained
-A Quick Q & A

WHEN IS A GAS CERTIFICATE REQUIRED?

Rising electricity costs, as well as an increase in the popularity among South-African homeowners to utilise gas installations in their homes led to gas regulations being introduced in 2009. According to the Pressure Equipment Regulations that have been promulgated under the Occupation Health and Safety Act (No 85 of 1993), all gas installations must have a Certificate of Conformity.

WHO NEEDS TO COMPLY TO THE GAS CERTIFICATION REGULATIONS?

Any home or business that has liquid gas installations installed must have a Gas Certificate of Conformity issued by an authorised person who is registered with the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Safety Association of Southern Africa (LPGAS).

WHEN DO YOU NEED A GAS CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY?

Home or building owners that wish to sell their home or property and have gas appliances installed.
The following is important to note:

- Any gas installations that includes gas fires or braais, gas stoves and ovens, as well as hot water systems require a gas certificate.
- A gas certificate must be obtained, and a copy needs to be delivered to the new purchaser.
- Gas inspections are also vital to ensure that insurance policies remain valid, as well as to check for safe installation. Incorrect installation of gas equipment can result in a gas leaks. This could have major health implications for inhabitants, but also increase the risk possible explosions.

WHAT DOES A GAS COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATE COST?

There are a number of costs involved in obtaining a Gas Compliance Certificate. The exact costs will differ between service providers. These costs will include:

- The gas inspection fee
- Costs related to remedial work, if necessary
- Issuing of a new gas certificate

WHAT IS CHECKED DURING A GAS INSPECTION?

There are a few key inspection points during a gas inspection:

- Gas leaks - The gas installation is free of any leaks.
- Gas equipment – The equipment used is SABS approved.
- Valves - Correct valves are used.
- Position - Gas equipment is not placed in illegal positions.

GAS EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST:

- Windows – Gas bottles must be at least 1 metre from any window.
- Gully - Gas bottles must be at least 2 metres from any gully.
- Tap – If a tap does not have a gully under it, the gas bottle can be right next to the tap.

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- Power point - Gas bottles must be at least 5 metres from a power point.
- Size of gas bottles outside – 2x 19kg max (from 1 November ’14 2x 48kg will be allowed).
- Size of gas bottle inside – 9 kg max, and if in a cupboard, it must have adequate ventilation.
- Gas bottle next to braai or fire place is allowed (if installed correctly).
- No gas bottles permitted in a garage.
- No switch socket outlets allowed under or directly above a gas hop or in the same compartment.
- Gas bottle must be more than 1 metre sideways from doors and windows.
- Gas bottle may not be less than 2 metres from drains and air vents.
- Gas bottle may not be less than 3 metres below windows (unless a non-combustible roof is installed).
- Gas bottle must be more than 1 metre from the property boundary wall (unless it is a fire wall).
- Light bulbs cannot be less than 1.5 metres above a gas bottle.
- Only class 1 or 2 copper pipes, or other approved gas piping (note: This is not the same copper piping as used by plumbers).
- Copper pipes going through a wall must be sleeved.
- Approved flexible gas hoses may not be more than 2 meters long and may not go through any partition (including wood, dry wall, cupboard wall etc).

WHAT DOES A GAS CERTIFICATE EXCLUDE?

- Servicing, upgrading or restoring an existing gas installation. Similar to a roadworthy test versus servicing or restoring a car, a gas inspection is exactly that, a compliance inspection.
- Portable or temporary gas appliances, such as portable BBQ's, patio heaters and internal heaters. These items are normally not included in the sale of the property and will be removed from the premises by the seller.
- Replacing of gas cylinders that look old.
- Refill of gas bottles.
- Relocation of gas bottles for aesthetical reasons.
- Actual gas appliances, e.g. stoves, heaters, braais, hops, geysers etc. Inspections are limited to the gas installation only.

WHAT ARE THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE GAS CERTIFICATE?

- Pressure Equipment Regulations were also promulgated under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (effective October 2009), which brought gas appliances installed in properties more or less in line with electrical installations.
- Gas appliances installed in properties need a Gas Compliance Certificate.
- Gas installations for which certificates are required include built-in gas fires or braais, gas stoves, hot water systems and the like.
- From 1st October 2009, it is required that any person installing a liquid gas appliance at a property must have a Certificate of Conformity issued in respect thereof.
- The certificate may only be issued by an authorised person registered as such with the LPGAS, after he has inspected the installation and is satisfied that it is safe and leak free.
- Furthermore, in terms of Regulation 17(3) of the Pressure Equipment Regulations, the law speaks of a certificate being required after any installation, alteration, modification or change of ownership of property which necessarily implies that a certificate would need to be in place or issued upon the transfer of a property.
- The parties cannot contract out of it – it is required in respect of all properties where there is a gas installation, whether the owner lives there, rents out the property or whether it is vacant or stands empty for most of the year.

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HOW LONG IS A GAS CERTIFICATE VALID FOR?

There is no regulation regarding the length of the period of validity of a Gas Compliance Certificate. A certificate is required on the sale of the property regardless of how old the existing one may be. Regulation 17(3) of the Pressure Equipment Regulations promulgated in terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993 became effective on 1 October 2009 and makes it compulsory for a Gas Compliance Certificate to be obtained in the event that a property is sold.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE IN OBTAINING A GAS CERTIFICATE?

The procedure for obtaining a gas certificate is as follows:

- If you (or the seller) have gas appliances installed in your home or property, you will require a gas certificate when you want to sell your property.
- You, the estate agent, or transferring attorney can request for a gas inspection by any service provider registered with the LPGAS.
- The inspector will quote the seller on the relevant inspection fee.
- The inspection will be booked on acceptance of the inspection quote.
- The gas certificate will be issued in the case of 100% compliance – normally included in the inspection fee.
- In the case that remedial work is required to make the gas installation compliant, the inspector will issue a detailed report with a costing to perform the remedial work.
- Rectifications are done in order to issue a new Gas Compliance Certificate.
- Have your gas installations checked by a registered gas installer on an annual basis.

GENERAL LPG GAS SAFETY TIPS:

- Always use a registered gas installer.
- Always use a qualified gas dealer.
- Always use a verified and tested gas product.
- Always check the seal on a gas cylinder matches the brand of the cylinder.
- Always check gas appliances before use.