

When is a Gas Certificate required?

The rapidly increasing cost of electricity has resulted in a growth in popularity among many South African homeowners to utilise gas installations in their homes.

According to the regulations that were introduced in 2009, all gas installations must have a Certificate of Conformity according to the Pressure Equipment Regulations that have been promulgated under the Occupation Health and Safety Act (No 85 of 1993).

According to the regulation, any homeowner who has a liquid gas installation installed in their home must have a Gas Certificate of Conformity issued by an authorized person who is registered with the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Safety Association of Southern Africa (LPGAS).

It is also important for homeowners to know that if they wish to sell their home and they have a gas appliance installed, they are required to obtain a gas certificate and deliver a copy thereof to the new purchaser.

The types of gas installations that require this certificate include gas fires or braais, gas stoves and ovens, as well as hot water systems. It is vital for all homeowners to realise that such an inspection is not just essential for their insurance policy to remain valid, but even more importantly, that it is conducted to ensure that the installation is safe and their family is not put at risk. If a gas appliance has been incorrectly installed and results in a gas leak this could have major health implications for a family, not to mention the huge danger involved of an explosion.

What does a Gas Compliance Certificate cost?

Just like with all the other Certificates, we cannot tell you upfront what the overall cost of a Gas Compliance Certificate may be, until we have performed the Gas Inspection.

What we can tell you upfront is what the Gas Inspection will cost, as per our Inspection Fees.

Once we have performed the Gas Inspection we will know if any remedial work is required. If your Gas Installation is compliant and NO further rectifications are required, a New Gas Certificate will be issued to you at no additional charge over and above the initial Gas Inspection Fee.

However, should remedial work be required to make your gas installation compliant we will issue you with a detailed report on the work required and the cost thereof.



An example of too much gas on the premises. Max 2 x 48kg bottles allowed.

Upon acceptance of this quotation, we will complete the required rectifications after which we will issue you with a New Gas Certificate.

What is checked during a Gas Inspection?

As with all the different Compliance Certificates there are certain items that must be, or made, compliant before we can issue the Compliance Certificate. While we cannot list the entire regulation book here, for lack of space, we can list some of the more pertinent items.

Gas is a potentially explosive substance, so it makes sense that performing a leak test to ensure the gas installation is leak free is the number one priority. We further ensure that SABS approved equipment is used, the correct valves are used, and that equipment is not placed in illegal positions, as per the below examples.

Windows – gas bottles must be at least 1m from any window. Gully – gas bottles must be at least 2m from any gully:

- Tap – if a tap does not have a gully under it, the gas bottle can be right next to the tap.
- Power point – gas bottles must be at least 5m 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 fireplace is allowed if installed correctly.
- No gas bottles permitted in a garage.
- No switch socket outlets allowed under a gas hob or in the same compartment.
- Gas bottle must be more than 1m sideways from doors and windows.
- Gas bottle may not be less than 2m from drains and air vents.
- Gas bottle may not be less than 3m below windows (unless a non-combustible roof is installed).
- Gas bottle must be more than 1m from the property boundary wall (unless it is a fire wall).
- Light bulbs cannot be less than 1.5m above a gas bottle.

Other gas installation rules:

- Only class 1 or 2 copper pipes, or other approved gas piping, may be used (Note: This is not the same copper piping as used by plumbers).
- Copper pipes going through a wall must be sleeved.
- Approved flexible gas hose may not be more than 2m long and may not go through any partition (including wood, dry wall, cupboard wall etc.).

LPGAS provides the following useful tips regarding gas safety:

- 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.

What is NOT covered by the Gas Certificate?

As with all the Compliance Certificates, there are limits as to what we and the seller are responsible for in order for a Compliance Certificate to be issued.

We are limited to whatever regulations are in place at the time of the inspection. It is important to note that there is a big difference in issuing a Compliance Certificate and "servicing, upgrading or restoring" a Gas Installation. (Similar to roadworthy versus servicing or restoring a car.)

The primary concern of the Gas Compliance Certificate is **SAFETY**.

We are not concerned with non-compliance issues such as:

- **Portable, temporary gas appliances**, such as portable BBQ's, patio heaters, internal heaters are not covered. These items are normally not included in the sale of the property and will be removed from the premises by the seller.
- We do not replace gas cylinders simply because they don't look brand new.
- We do not re-fill gas bottles.
- We do not relocate gas bottles to an aesthetically more pleasing position, if where they are situated is a legal position we leave them there.
- We do not install larger gas bottles, but we may remove or install smaller bottles if the maximum permissible volume is exceeded.
- The inspection is limited to the Gas Installation only; the Gas Certificate **does not cover the actual gas appliances**, stove, heater, braai, hop, geyser etc.

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 braai's, gas stoves, hot water systems and the like.

From 1 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 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Safety Association of Southern Africa (LPGAS), after he has inspected the installation and is satisfied that it is safe and leak free. Gas installations for which certificates of conformity are required would include built-in gas fires or braai's, gas stoves, hot water systems and the like. 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.

Validity of the Gas Certificate:

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.

It should be noted that it matters not that the installation of the gas appliance predates 1 October 2009, the certificate is required despite this fact.

Unlike in the case of the Electrical Compliance Certificate, there is no similar regulation regarding the length of the period of validity of a gas compliance certificate. It is, therefore, recommended that such a certificate is acquired on the sale of the property regardless of how old the existing one may be.

What is the procedure in obtaining a Gas Certificate?

Selling your home? If you have gas appliances installed in your home, then you will probably require a Gas Certificate.

You, your Estate Agent, or even your Transferring Attorney can submit the request for a Gas Inspection using our Online Inspection Request Form or if you prefer you can download a hard copy of our Inspection Request Form fill it in and email/fax it back to us.

We will then contact the relevant person, normally the seller, to explain the inspection fee options and make the booking to perform the gas inspection.

Should the Gas Installation be 100% compliant we will issue the Gas Certificate at no additional charge over and above the Gas Inspection Fee. In the case that remedial work is required to make the Gas Installation compliant we will issue the client with a detailed report with a costing to perform the remedial work.

At this point the client can either accept our quotation, after which we will perform the rectifications and we will issue you a new Gas Compliance Certificate.

OR

The client may choose to rather proceed with another registered Gas Installer and have that company issue the new Gas Certificate. Please note that Inspection Fees are due and payable irrespective of who ultimately issues the Gas Certificate.

We recommend you have your gas installations checked by a registered gas installer on an annual basis.