



Taking responsibility for gas safety

Putting Quality Management systems in place and taking full responsibility for new build and refurbishment projects are crucial for Local Authorities and Housing Associations in ensuring gas safety management. We look at how we have been working with customers through audits, accreditation and training.

Look out for us at three major conferences and exhibitions in the autumn! Come and visit us on our stands - we would be delighted to talk to you about our exciting new plans.

enquiries@corgitechnical.com

01256 548040

www.corgitechnical.com

VRQ double success

For Dave Watts of Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation, successfully completing his VRQ in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing proved so beneficial to him that he has gone on to do the VRQ in Facilities Management as well.

One of the first people to successfully complete the new VRQ in Gas Safety Management for Social Housing was Dave Watts, Gas Section Team Leader at Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (K&C TMO). With the organisation responsible for just under 10,000 properties and 6,500 of them having a gas supply, gas safety is a crucial issue for Dave and his team.

K&C TMO is a tenant led organisation which maintains numerous properties for Kensington and Chelsea Council. He has over 4,500 gas appliances to help maintain and also another 2,000 having gas for cooking but no other appliances. Dave Watts heads a team of three people and a gas contractor and between them they maintain and manage all gas related issues.

Dave took the VRQ in Gas Safety Management in Social Housing to improve his knowledge and understanding of Gas Safety issues. He commented: "The course was very good. I thought I knew a lot about the job, but the course gave me much more information, particularly on the technical side. I installed boilers for a living nearly 20 years ago and then progressed to management and running contractors.

This course has filled a gap in the market and will enable management to keep on top of the role with the latest information on compliance and best practice."

Having successfully completed the course, Dave has now started the VRQ for Facilities Management, which has some overlap with the one for Social Housing, but addresses other specific issues. The FM VRQ includes extra modules covering commercial catering and larger industrial appliances which Dave has found to be of particular value.

Dave explains: "The VRQ in Social Housing has been invaluable in helping me to carry out my current role, making me feel more confident in my role and filling in gaps in my knowledge. My future at the K & C TMO is not certain due to restructures within the organisation and I wanted to keep my skills and qualifications up to date so that I am prepared for any role that might be appropriate for me. So I decided to take the VRQ in FM as well. This is also a very good course and has given me a much broader knowledge which should increase my employability and value as an employee."

"Once I have completed the second course I should be very well qualified for any role in gas management."



CORGI plays crucial role as Carbon Monoxide Incident Investigators

A key role that is being carried out by CORGI Technical Consultants is the managing and participating in the investigation of fatal and non-fatal Carbon Monoxide (CO) incidents caused by gas appliances and faulty workmanship.

John Gregory is a professionally qualified gas Technical Consultancy Manager at CORGI Technical Services with over thirty five years' experience in the gas industry. He has appeared as an Expert Witness for many cases representing gas suppliers and enforcement bodies. CORGI is notified of around 100 suspected Carbon Monoxide (CO) incidents a year, two of which are discussed in this article.

On Good Friday 2012 in central London a non-fatal incident occurred – a CO leak affected a man and his wife, which resulted in both being treated in hospital. The couple lived in a high quality apartment complex. In this case three boilers were located in the basement boiler room, where problems had developed with the gas valve on one of the boilers. This led to an explosion within the boiler which blew the flue pipe off the boiler and allowed products of combustion, containing high levels of carbon monoxide, to escape into the plant room which migrated into the apartment.

Gas suppliers have a legal duty to report all CO incidents to the Health & Safety Executive and undertake a CO incident investigation by a suitably qualified engineer.

John commented: "It is very important that an incident gets reported immediately after it occurs so that an investigation can be carried out before anything is touched. Sadly, it is very common for possible evidence to be disturbed after an incident before an investigation can be carried out. It is in everyone's interest that an incident is investigated so that lessons can be learned and new procedures put in place if necessary."

"At CORGI, we carry out investigations for most of the big gas suppliers. As soon as we are notified of an incident we attend the scene, test for CO, identify the source and confirm the cause. We send the report to the Health & Safety Executive and the gas supplier. If the case comes to court then we supply an Expert Witness to give evidence. It is a crucial role in ensuring that gas safety standards are maintained to the highest level."

CORGI recently investigated an incident in a Sports Centre in Essex which led to several people being taken very ill, although there were no fatalities in this instance. The incident occurred due to a faulty boiler leaking CO into the plant room which was then drawn into the air conditioning system, which pushed the contaminated air around the whole building.

"Following our investigation changes were made to the maintenance practices to ensure this couldn't happen again. Our role as incident investigators and expert witnesses is crucial to maintaining the highest standards in gas safety in buildings across the UK."



Recognition for quality management with the new CORGI Accreditation “Quality Gas Safety Management”

Demonstrating that an organisation has universally recognised quality management systems gives reassurance to customers. The CORGI Accredited Quality Management scheme has instant recognition and respect.

With responsibilities over safety becoming ever more stringent, simply providing practical competence is no longer sufficient. Customers are increasingly demanding evidence of quality management systems as a means of demonstrating compliance with statutory legislation and the CORGI accreditation gives that reassurance as a universally recognised sign of quality.

The CORGI Quality Accreditation Scheme provides that recognition, demonstrating the achievement of high standards of governance. Currently only available to residential housing providers, it applies to the management and control of gas work. CORGI's tried and trusted accreditation system has been designed to assess the quality of management systems and arrangements for safe gas work. The accreditation is valid for a maximum of three years with yearly surveillance visits and covers a number of specific areas, the minimum of which are detailed below:-

- Gas safety management systems (Gas safety policy)
- Specific contractor instructions – specification/SLA (service level agreement)
- Qualifying contractors and operatives
- Uniformity of documentation
- Unsafe situations
- Gas escapes and spillages of fumes
- Gaining access
- Voids
- Mutual exchange
- Quality control
- Storage and retrieval of landlords' gas safety records
- Dealing with gas-related complaints

All Gas Safe registered installers used by the organisation must hold Public Liability insurance with a minimum of £2 million. For those residential housing providers with internal workforces, here is an overview of what is required to become compliant. CORGI works with organisations to fulfil all of these obligations to achieve the Quality Accreditation status.

- **Company Ethos** – statement from the Chief Executive/ Managing Director to confirm the organisations' commitment to gas safety
- **Scope of work** – detail the general work activities
- **Structure** – detail the company's family tree structure
- **Training and qualifications** – detail the mechanisms used for control of operatives' qualifications
- **Work allocation** – detail how work allocation is controlled
- **Supervision and quality control** – detail arrangements for when, how and by whom
- **Procedures** – detail specific procedures for work undertaken (eg engagement of sub-contractors)
- **Work documentation** – detail the company's policy for documents to be used
- **Technical support** – detail how and when technical support will be provided to the engineers



Taking responsibility for compliance in new build and refurbishment projects

Are Housing Associations taking full responsibility for compliance of gas work in new property development and refurbishment? Too often it seems that outside gas contractors are wrongly being entrusted with this responsibility.

Gas work within new property development and refurbishment within Housing Associations is often carried out by external gas contractors. There seems to be an alarming trend towards the absolving of responsibility by Housing Associations for this work to the gas contractor by not taking a proactive role in Quality Control and supervision. This is leading to expensive rectification work programmes further down the line.

Most Housing Associations and Local Authorities are proactive in managing gas contractors who undertake Landlord Gas Safety checks as part of the responsibilities laid down by the Gas Safety Regulations (CP12 LGSR) but these processes are not extending to new gas installation work within new build and refurbishment programmes.

To ensure compliance and to save Housing Associations significant funds for the future, CORGI has been working with development and refurbishment teams by giving independent



inspections throughout major work programmes, assessing gas work at first fix, second fix and commission or sign off stages.

Lee Carter Technical Expert at CORGI commented: "This has proved a very cost effective measure that ensures clients receive value for money and a safe gas installation. It benefits everyone to speak to us at the start of a project and we are happy to speak to Housing Associations and Local Authorities at an early planning stage to help them prevent unnecessary costs being incurred."

In the News...

Camping research by Gas Safety Trust reveals serious gas safety concerns

A recent survey by the Gas Safety Trust of campers and caravaners has highlighted some alarming perceptions among UK adults of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning when camping.

[Click here for full article](#)

Local Authority prosecuted for gas safety failings

A report from the Health & Safety Executive states that the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has been fined £83,600 for failing to arrange annual safety checks on gas appliances in tenanted accommodation.

[Click here for full article](#)

Wakefield landlord in court for flouting gas safety

A Wakefield landlord has been fined after ignoring repeated warnings to have gas appliances at his rented property checked for safety.

[Click here for full article](#)

Events

Gas Forum events

- Bristol – 5 Sept
- Birmingham – 11 Sept
- Glasgow – 26 Sept
- Wakefield – 10 Oct
- North East – 17 Oct
- London – 8 Nov

Contact us at gasforum@corgitechnical.com if you would like to attend.

VRQ in Gas Safety Management for Social Housing course start dates:-

- Sheffield – 22 Aug
- Edinburgh – 19 Sept
- London – 10 Oct
- Manchester – 16 Oct
- Maidstone – 24 Oct
- Durham – 6 Nov
- Leicester – 14 Nov
- Liverpool – 12 Dec

VRQ in Gas Safety Facilities Management course start dates:-

- Manchester – 12 Sept
- South West – 21 Nov
- Midlands – 5 Dec

If you would like more information on our courses contact us at training@corgitechnical.com

CORGI at Exhibitions and Conferences

Come and visit our stands at the major Social Housing Conferences and Exhibitions in the Autumn of 2012. Find out about our new VRQ course and the latest announcements from CORGI

Social Housing Exhibition 2012

17-19 September 2012
ICC, Birmingham

Stand A15

SFHA Property Maintenance Conference & Exhibition 2012

22-23 October 2012
Apex City Quay Hotel, Dundee

Stand tbc

Homes 2012

14-15 November 2012
ExCel, London

Stand A46



CORGI Technical Services Ltd

CORGI Technical Services Ltd has over 30 years of technical expertise in all aspects of gas safety. With comprehensive site audits, training for employees, a new VRQ gas safety qualification, legal advice and expert witness testimony, CORGI works with local authorities, housing associations, private landlords, contractors, energy suppliers and the travel industry, to support them with their gas safety obligations, compliance and continued improvement.

www.corgitechnical.com

CORGI Technical Services Ltd
8 The Park Centre, Easter Park, Silchester, Berkshire RG7 2PQ
email enquiries@corgitechnical.com
Tel 01256 548040

