

Energy

BULLETIN

Office of **ENERGY WA**

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Defective Gas Installations

Gas Supply Regulations

In Energy Bulletin No. 15 (October 1999), there was a brief update of progress with the proposed *Gas Supply Regulations*.

The Minister for Energy recently confirmed that these regulations need to be in place prior to the completion of the sale of AlintaGas. The regulations will provide for an adequate technical and safety legislative framework to support the transition from public to private ownership.


The regulations, which will be formally titled as the *Gas Standards (Gas Supply) Regulations*, will ensure that Network Operators (gas suppliers) constructing, operating and maintaining gas distribution systems will provide for:

- the safety of people and property; and
- acceptable standards of quality, reliability and metering for the supply of gas to consumers.

A draft of the regulations, prepared by Parliamentary Counsel, has been reviewed by a Working Group comprising representatives from major stakeholders (AlintaGas, Boral, Kleenheat Gas, Office of Energy).

Once a further draft has been received from Parliamentary Counsel, it will be made available for public comment. The draft regulations will be available on the Office of Energy website. Notices will also be placed in newspapers, seeking written comments on the draft. Also, selected major stakeholders will be supplied with individual copies to ensure all interested parties have the opportunity to comment.

After comments have been received and assessed, the regulations will be finalised to allow promulgation early in 2000.



ALBERT KOENIG
DIRECTOR OF ENERGY SAFETY

Gas Market Changes

Recently, amendments to the *Energy Coordination Act 1994* were passed, to introduce the licensing of:

- gas distributors (those operating gas pipelines at a pressure less than 1.9 Megapascals); and
- gas traders, who buy gas, have it transported over gas pipelines for a charge by gas distributors, and then retail it to consumers.

This is all part of the move to further open the gas market to competition. Ultimately, by mid 2002, all gas consumers will be free to choose their gas supplier.

The above licensing schemes are administered by the Coordinator of Energy of the Office of Energy (Perth Office location).

The changes pave the way for the entry of new players into the business of installing and operating gas distribution pipes in subdivisions, something that is commonplace in the United Kingdom, for example.

Such changes, however, raise other issues as described below.

Gas Technical Issues Working Group

As the gas distribution segment of the WA energy supply market opens up to competition, technical issues are emerging in regard to the design and construction of extensions to existing distribution networks and new distribution systems (eg. in new subdivision or in an existing township). These issues require resolution to ensure that new distribution systems or extensions satisfy reasonable standards in terms of network capacity, performance and operational flexibility.

The Office of Energy recently established a Gas Technical Issues Working Group consisting of representatives from:

- AlintaGas
- Kleenheat Gas
- CMS Gas Transmission
- AGL
- Boral Energy

- Civil Contractors Federation
- Association of Consulting Engineers Australia (ACEA)
- Office of Energy (Chairman: Geoff Wood)

to identify these issues and formulate strategies to further their resolution.

The Working Group identified a number of technical issues and developed possible solutions which are contained in a set of draft guidelines. The guidelines, once finalised, will be published by the Office of Energy. They will provide assistance to industry in resolving distribution technical issues that are likely to arise as a consequence of competition.

For further information, please contact Geoff Wood Principal Engineer Gas Supply by telephoning 08 9422 5294.

Review of Electricity (Licensing) Regulations 1991

The *Electricity (Licensing) Regulations 1991* govern electricity installations in consumers' premises. The objective is to ensure the safety of consumers in the use of electricity within their installations, as well as the safety of those doing the work.

Too many Western Australians are being killed and injured by electricity. While the trend is slowly downwards, nearly three Western Australians per million population are killed by electricity every year. Furthermore, these fatalities are the tip of the iceberg. There are many more who are injured or who have near misses, which but for an element of luck, could also have been fatalities.

While education and information are important elements of changing behaviour so that these statistics can be reduced, inevitably there is a role for regulation where the force of law is required to protect the public interest.

The *Electricity (Licensing) Regulations 1991* were promulgated in 1991 and have not been renewed apart from a minor revision in 1996. Regulations should be reviewed periodically, with five years recommended in some jurisdictions. Given the changes that have occurred since 1991, a review is appropriate.

The Office of Energy has therefore commenced a review of the *Electricity (Licensing) Regulations 1991*. A discussion paper is being developed, to seek input from all interested parties, including consumers, on the regulations.

Further detail of the review will be announced in future Energy Bulletins.

AlintaGas Inspection Plan and Policy Statement

The Director of Energy Safety recently approved AlintaGas' new Inspection Plan and Policy Statement.

This regulatory scheme requires AlintaGas to establish a declared policy in relation to the inspection of consumers' gas installations and gas fitters' work, and commit to a formal plan for conducting these inspections and generally discharging their duties as a gas supplier under the Act.

Working with the Office of Energy's Technical and Safety Division, AlintaGas has developed a system which takes account of extra skills and knowledge gained by AlintaGas "authorised" gas fitters. This allows them, subject to satisfactory ongoing performance, to commence gas supply on behalf of AlintaGas as soon as their gasfitting work is completed. Performance is monitored through a sample inspection regime and a gas fitter's "authorised" status is conditional upon them achieving and maintaining high level safety and quality outcomes.

The Plan also provides for more focused inspections in cases where gas fitters have only recently qualified. It also requires that the work of gas fitters who are not "authorised" is checked in every case, prior to commencement of gas supply.

By developing and committing to the Plan, AlintaGas is demonstrating its firm intent to ensure the quality and safety of consumers' gas installations they supply with gas, and to maintain high standards of gasfitting. AlintaGas will be implementing its Plan during the next three months.

For gas fitters, the Plan provides a means by which they can, with some extra training and commitment, provide their customers with a

quality gas installation and efficient connection service. It does, however, mean that gas fitters who "sign up" must deliver excellence in both safety and quality outcomes the first time, every time. This is because they no longer have an inspector looking at every job before it is supplied with gas.

New Publication - "Guidelines for the Application of Safety Instrumented Systems for Industrial Gas Appliances"

The Office of Energy recently published a document "Guidelines for the Application of Safety Instrumented Systems for Industrial Gas Appliances". It was prepared with the assistance of industry specialists in instrumentation and process control systems.

The document is based on industry standards and codes where practicable and provides guidelines only. Industry operatives have no statutory obligation to follow them (other than where reference is made to current regulatory requirements).

The Guidelines are principally intended to assist design engineers, maintenance engineers, technicians, operational staff and inspectors to deal with industrial gas appliances (also known as Type 'B' gas appliances).

They outline recommended principles, procedures and safe practices for the Application of Safety Instrumented Systems (SIS) on Type 'B' gas appliances, which fall within the scope of AS 3814/Australian Gas Association Code AG 501: Code for Industrial and Commercial Gas-Fired Appliances.

The Guidelines address programmable electronic systems, associated input and output devices and electrical and electronic interfaces.

Examples of these are:

- Programmable Electronic Safety Systems (PESSs)
- Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs)
- Field input devices such as pressure and flow instrumentation, flame scanners, valve position switches etc
- Field output devices such as solenoid valves, control valves, igniters etc

- Communication links
- Power supplies
- Electrical installation.

The Guidelines should also be useful for training organisations, as well as persons conducting safety awareness talks or presentations to industry personnel.

The Office of Energy hopes that the release of the Guidelines will help improve the safety of the design, installation, commissioning, operation and maintenance of Type 'B' Gas Appliances.

Copies of the Guidelines may be obtained from Kim Wong, Acting Principal Engineer Gas Installations & Appliances, Office of Energy by telephoning 08 9422 5254. Suggestions for improvements to the document are also welcome.

Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS)

The introduction of Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) is a program that sets minimum allowable energy efficiency levels for various household electrical appliances. The strategy is to remove from the market, appliances which are inefficient and waste electricity, thus reducing the production of greenhouse gases (and saving consumers money).

Most will be familiar with the Star Rating labels for whitegoods — the more stars, the more efficient the appliance. The labels enable prospective purchasers to assess the energy efficiency performance of different brands of the same type of appliance. They can then factor the running cost into the decision making process of purchasing a new appliance.

Retailers are compelled by law to ensure that star rating labels are displayed on all new household refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washing machines, clothes dryers and refrigerative air conditioners.

MEPS will complement the Star Rating labels by making it illegal to sell inefficient appliances - effectively removing the one and two star appliances from the market.

The adoption of MEPS commenced in 1995 when, with the emergence of the impending greenhouse gas problem, the Australian and

New Zealand Minerals and Energy Council of Ministers (ANZMEC) agreed that MEPS should be introduced in late 1999. This decision was reinforced by the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 under which Australia will be required to reduce its emission of greenhouse gases. The introduction of MEPS legislation is now taking place in most States. It is expected that implementation will be completed by October 2000.

MEPS will initially apply only to household refrigerators, freezers and electric storage water heaters.

The method of setting MEPS levels has been documented in various Australian Standards. These Standards were developed by Standards Australia committees comprising representatives from industry, consumer groups, Government agencies and other interested bodies. This process ensures that the Standards are adequate and realistic and do not inhibit any innovative designs, which are aimed to meet customer needs. The Standards are generally aligned with international standards to satisfy global uniformity.

It is expected that baseline MEPS levels will become more stringent in the future as technological advances enable the energy efficiency of appliances to be improved.

For further information on MEPS:

- telephone the Home Energy Line on 1300 658 158
- visit the Office of Energy WA website at: www.energy.wa.gov.au
- visit the Australian Government website at: www.isr.gov.au/resources/netenergy

BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

Western Power Appeals to Minister

Similarly to gas suppliers, electricity supply authorities have consumer installation inspection obligations, to ensure the safety of consumers. For this purpose, they produce "Inspection System Plans and Policy Statements" that detail the manner in which inspection work will be conducted.

This is to comply with the regulations, which require each electricity supplier to "establish and maintain an effective system of inspection".

The Director of Energy Safety recently reviewed Western Power's final submission for their new Plan and was unable to approve it without a number of amendments, as a condition of approval. Western Power is currently appealing this decision to the Minister for Energy. The outcome will be advised to industry once available.

Conflicts of Interest

It recently came to the attention of the Director of Energy Safety that some independent Type "B" Gas Appliance Inspectors have other business interests that may give rise to a potential conflict of interest.

The Director has therefore reviewed the terms of their designations and now requires each such inspector to ensure certain principles will be followed, in order to avoid concerns of this kind in the future.

National Code of Practice for Electricity Network Safety

During recent months, the Electricity Supply Association of Australia (ESAA) has been drafting this new code, under the oversight of a Steering Committee of selected ESAA members (eg. Western Power) and ERAC members (ERAC being the Council of Electrical Regulatory Authorities).

Recently the draft was issued for industry comment and the final version is expected to be available in January 2000. It will form the basis for regulation of the electricity supply industry in WA. An industry working group is expected to be formed early in the New Year, to assist the Office of Energy in the framing of the regulations. These are expected to have a scope similar to the Gas Supply Regulations covered on page 1.

Once the regulations are drafted, a public comment phase will follow, expected to be about August 2000.

For further information, please contact Doug Ayre, Principal Engineer Electricity Supply by telephoning (08) 9422 5286.

Review of the "WA Electrical Requirements"

Comments have been received from industry as part of the Office of Energy's review of this important document. Further discussions are being held in early December with some industry parties to ensure that the new edition will meet industry and regulatory needs in the best possible way.

Overhead Line Design

The ESAA has published a new edition of its well known "Guidelines for Design and Maintenance of Overhead Distribution and Transmission Lines", HB C(b)1 - 1999. It can be purchased from Standards Australia.

Alternative formats of the Energy Bulletin may be available to meet the needs of people with disabilities

The Office of Energy website is located at:

www.energy.wa.gov.au

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Plumbing and Gasfitting Industry Award for Excellence

On 23 October 1999, members and guests of the Master Plumbers and Mechanical Services Association attended the industry's premier event, the Award for Excellence presentation and gala dinner.

The purpose of the Award for Excellence competition is to encourage and reward outstanding achievement by final year plumbing and gasfitting apprentices and licensing plumbers and gas fitters.

This year's competition was very successful and attracted a number of nominations from across the State. The success of the competition and the experiences gained by the apprentices and trades people through this event leaves the industry in good stead for the future.

The ongoing success of events such as this relies heavily on the involvement and support of industry.

Winners of the various categories were:

<i>Award for Excellence:</i>	<i>Michael Grant (Pride Plumbing)</i>
<i>Runner Up:</i>	<i>Stephen Ball (Plumbing and Painting Training Company)</i>
<i>Geoffrey Arthur Smith Memorial Encouragement Award:</i>	<i>Shane Schoof (All Round Plumbing Services)</i>
<i>Water Supply:</i>	<i>Michael Grant (Pride Plumbing)</i>
<i>Sanitary Plumbing Award:</i>	<i>Shane Schoof (All Round Plumbing Services)</i>
<i>Welding and Brazing Award:</i>	<i>Stephen Ball (Plumbing and Painting Training Company)</i>
<i>Mechanical Services Award:</i>	<i>Luke Schwagermann (Transfield Maintenance)</i>
<i>Gasfitting Award:</i>	<i>Shane Schoof (All Round Plumbing Services)</i>
<i>Employer of the Year:</i>	<i>Pride Plumbing, Bayswater</i>
<i>Customer Service by an AlintaGas Approved Installer:</i>	<i>Gary Taylor (Garlor Plumbing and Gasfitting)</i>
<i>AlintaGas Approved Installer Business Achiever:</i>	<i>Pride Plumbing, Bayswater</i>