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Fire and Gas Safety Guidance for Farmers using LPG for Caravans

Some farmers use caravans on their land for seasonal workers or to provide holiday accommodation. This guidance sets out some of the hazards and basic safety rules that should be followed and includes some important legal duties.

For more information on domestic gas safety see the HSE Gas Safety homepage: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/index.htm>

For more information on gas safety on farms see the Liquid Gas UK website.

Hazards

Carbon Monoxide – A number of people die every year, in the UK, from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances that have not been properly installed or maintained. This happens when gas does not burn properly, for example when there is not enough fresh air in a room and/or the flue gets blocked up.

Gas leaks – leaking LPG building up in an unventilated confined area can lead to a flash fire or explosion if the gas finds a source of ignition. As LPG is heavier than air, it can collect low points such as drains or ditches and even in the open air on still days.

Gas leak in a caravan caused by a pipework or hose leak.

Gas leak in a caravan caused by an inappropriate regulator that fails. Fire in a caravan caused by misuse of a gas appliance, for example too close to combustible or flammable material, or by malfunctioning burners which ignite nearby flammable material.

Fire from another source such as a grass fire that affects stored gas in cylinders or storage vessels.

Precautions

LPG storage, pipework and appliances

You have a legal duty to maintain all the gas pipework (including hoses), and appliances (including their flues and their prescribed fixed ventilation) in a safe condition. This means there must be an ongoing programme, by someone competent to do so, of regular inspections together with any necessary repairs and servicing.

Only a gas installer who is competent to work with LPG should carry out any work on the gas system; for all work except on storage vessels and cylinders they must be Gas Safe registered. The gas supplier or their contractor normally carries out work on the storage vessel. All Gas Safe registered installers carry an ID card with their photograph; on the reverse is a list of their areas of competence. If you have any doubts about an installer you can check them out by visiting the Gas Safe Register website (<https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>) or telephoning them on 0800 408 5500.

You don't need to be Gas Safe registered to change gas cylinders or to replace a hose connecting a cylinder to the other gas pipework; nor to replace the hose or regulator on a portable gas appliance. But if the work is not done correctly there is a risk that there could be a gas leak or other problems so whoever does it must know how to do it safely, check the work for gas leaks and follow any manufacturer's instructions.

Before a caravan is used for the first time you must make sure that you have had the gas appliances checked for safety by a Gas Safe registered installer with the appropriate LPG competences, unless they are newly installed (in which case there is a year's grace before a check is needed, but you should keep a copy of documentation provided by the installer.) This check should be repeated every 12 months.

You should:

- a. Keep a copy of the safety check record for two years.
- b. Give a copy to the tenant, or if the period of occupation is less than 28 days, put it up in a prominent place in the caravan.
- c. Have the record translated or explained to employees who do not read English.

If LPG is piped to the caravans from a bulk storage vessel, even if you do not own the storage vessel, you will also have legal duties under gas safety legislation as a 'gas supplier' who has to make arrangements for an emergency service in the event of a leak of gas or fumes. If you provide gas from cylinders you share these supplier duties with the cylinder gas supplier. You should come to a contractual agreement with your gas supplier about how this is done.

The pressure from the bulk storage tank or cylinder is controlled by a regulator(s). It is important that these are inspected and changed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. We would recommend that this check is carried out as part of the appliance inspection recommended above. In accordance with regulations and guidance, Liquid Gas UK also recommends that the regulator is fitted with an over pressure shut off device (OPSO).

We would recommend the caravan is fitted with a carbon monoxide alarm -fitted and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. To be effective Liquid Gas UK recommend that you purchase detectors that are Kite marked to BS EN 50291-2.

Information and instruction

Make sure gas users have general safety information including:

The hazards and properties of LPG;

The importance of not blocking ventilation;

Using an appliance only for its intended purpose (for instance not using a gas cooker for heating);

Appliance manufacturers' instructions for users;

Basic advice for spotting the symptoms of carbon monoxide;

Have clear arrangements for reporting faults and making sure repairs are done;

Put up a notice detailing emergency action in a prominent position adjacent to the gas meter/ emergency control;

If your workers do not speak English, you should arrange to have essential information translated or explained.

Gas storage area

Follow the gas supplier's safety instructions for the gas storage area, (both for cylinders or a bulk storage vessel) including:

- a. Keep it clear of weeds, grass, rubbish and other combustible materials. (Don't use chlorate based weed killer as it can be a fire hazard);
- b. Don't allow sources of ignition such as bonfires, electrical equipment, barbecues near gas storage areas;
- c. Segregate full and empty cylinders;
- d. Keep the area secure and protected from accidental damage e.g. by vehicles Check with your gas supplier before making any changes that may affect storage or gas delivery e.g. providing screening for the tanks, building sheds or fences.

Fire Precautions

It is essential that you ask for advice from the Fire Prevention Officer (FPO) in your local Fire Service on the following matters:

The separation distances that should be provided and maintained between individual caravans and from farm buildings;

The provision of suitable fire-fighting equipment, such as permanently fixed hose reels and fire extinguishers. Such equipment needs to be regularly maintained and tested to ensure that it will function effectively when needed;

We would recommend the caravan is fitted with a smoke alarm - fitted and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. To be effective Liquid Gas UK recommend that you purchase alarms that are Kitemarked to BS EN 14604;

The means of giving warning in case of fire. You will need to consider how to deal with the issue of workers whose first language is not English to make sure they understand any instructions relating to the use of fire alarms and evacuation procedures;

Where there are cooking facilities in use in the caravans you should provide a suitable fire blanket.

Additional guidance

The HSE publish a number of guidance documents on fire safety.

Bulk LPG storage in Vessels:

Liquid Gas UK Code of Practice 1: Bulk LPG Storage at Fixed Installations Design, Installation and Operation of Vessels Located Above Ground

LPG Storage in cylinders:

Liquid Gas UK Code of Practice 7: Storage of Full and Empty LPG Cylinders and Cartridges Consumer Guidance Sheet 28: Safe Use of Propane and Butane Cylinders and Cartridges Consumer Guidance Sheet 39: Regulators – Safe Use HSE publications are obtainable through HSE Books, (Tel 01787 881165, [http:// www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)) or via HSE's web site, <http://www.hse.gov.uk>.

Liquid Gas UK

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