



20 April 09

Ref: 09-003

## BSS EXAMINER NEWS

Dear Examiner,

This edition of BSS Examiner News asks you to prepare for the next online improvements, explains what the change from CORGI to the Gas Safe Register means for examiners and provides information about a recent safety alert issued by the BSS through the boating media.

### **Registration update**

Well done for successfully registering online. Nearly all examiners are now 'full live' and raring to go, although I suspect some wives/partners may wish to take issue with this description.

Remember you can update your contact details, your county listings any privately arranged insurance details or Gas Safe Register number at anytime online. In fact you are now wholly responsible for keeping this information up to date. It's easy to do, simply log on to the system and once on the 'home' page, click on your 'Reg xxxx' number and then click on the 'Edit' button, make your amends and then click 'Save' followed by 'Copy Information' and the job is done. A pop-up box will let you know the changes have been made.

### **Examiner website update**

Watch out for an email on 24 April introducing the online BSS Examiner material ordering facility. Simple instructions on how to order online will follow a few days later. From 5 May onwards all BSS materials needed by examiners from day to day, for example certificates and report forms, must be ordered through the examiner website. After materials ordering the next facility to be launched will be examination recording online, planned for release in early June.

Other eagerly awaited website features such as technical and policy guidance supporting the examiner role will be available on the examiner website when it is formally launched.

### **Gas Safe Register™ – What is it and what does it mean for Examiners?**



The Gas Safe Register replaced CORGI's registration scheme in Great Britain from 1 April. Capita PLC is delivering the register under a ten year agreement with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

As with the CORGI scheme, a Gas Safe registered installer will have been checked to make sure they are competent to work safely and legally on gas installations which fall within scope of the Gas Safety [Installation and Use] Regulations. This will continue to mean installers having up to date and relevant 'ACS' qualifications and having examples of work checked.

I was asked recently about the impact of the new Gas Safe Register for examiners. The short answer is that there is no change from the previous arrangements under CORGI registration. It follows that where an examiner previously chose to be CORGI registered they should by now have transferred across to the Gas Safe Register. More information about any requirement for BSS Examiners to be Gas Safe registered follows in the next article.

One of the safety messages associated with the new mark is for the public to check an installers Gas Safe Register ID every time they have gas work carried out so as not to give rogue traders a chance. Because private boats fall outside of the scope of the 'Regulations' the BSS will continue to recommend work on boat gas systems is carried out by competent installers, i.e. persons having a relevant ACS-based qualification, which usually means that the installer will be Gas Safe registered as well.

## **LPG soundness testing on hire boats and houseboats – avoiding prosecution**

Following on from the introduction to the Gas Safe Register, here is a timely reminder that hire boats, boats used for residential purposes and floating businesses (such as cafés or shops) fall within scope of the Gas Safety [Installation and Use] Regulations (GSIUR) and as such any LPG 'work' must be undertaken by Gas Safe registered installers. *[Note also that only examiners trained and assessed to the 2002 BSS requirements may examine hire boats or floating businesses].*

As the definition of 'work' covers the removal and replacing of a screw nipple on a gas soundness test point this means that examiners who are not Gas Safe registered can only undertake a BSS gas soundness test on a hire boat, houseboat or floating business if:

1. a bubble tester is fitted and correctly located; **or**,
2. a soundness test conducted by a Gas Safe registered installer is observed.

It is the case that anyone found to have contravened the GSIUR can face fines of up to £5000 for each offence or even jail terms for very serious breaches.

If you are not Gas Safe registered my advice is to address this matter as part of your initial dealings with owners. Once you have established that a boat has a gas system, then find out to what use the boat concerned is put. I suggest you ask the following questions:

1. Is the boat hired out in the course of a business?
2. Is the boat used by anyone as a primary place of residence?
3. Do you invite people on board your boat in the course of a business, e.g. is it a café or shop?

If the answer to any of the above questions is yes then in order to carry out the BSS gas soundness test you will either have to observe a fitted bubble tester, or witness a Gas Safe registered installer carrying out the test with a manometer. *[Remember that in the event the boat is a hire boat or floating business, you must also have been trained and assessed to the 2002 BSS requirements].* Even if the answer to all three is 'no', I recommend that you make a brief record that you have asked the questions and received the negative answers.

## **Portable Gas Stove Safety Alert**

You may recall that in BSS Examiner News 08-004 we provided information about portable gas stoves fueled by butane gas canisters and the potential for an explosion if the appliance was used with the pan support upside down. Well now we have issued a media release in conjunction with Hampshire County Council Trading Standards department intended to help keep boaters safe. This release is included for your information in an annex to this newsletter. Expect to see this subject covered in boating mags and in user group newsletters/websites.

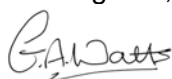
My advice is that if you see one of these appliances on a boat you are examining, then advise the owner that the BSS are recommending not to use these, or replace the gas canister, inside the boat and that they must be stowed when not in use in the same way as LPG cylinders.

## **BSS Examiner electrical knowledge and understanding assessment**

As mentioned in previous editions of BSS Examiner News, all examiners are to attend an assessment and optional training on electrical knowledge and understanding between late Autumn 2009 and the end of March 2010. The precise dates, venues and cost of the courses will be confirmed shortly.

As previously reported, Examiners can elect to attend a full 2-day course or opt for ½ day assessment without training at a reduced cost. If you feel your electrical knowledge and your application of BSS Part 3 and 4 checks is good then you may choose only to attend the assessment. In order to help you make this decision I will within the next month be sending all examiners a self assessment sheet, if after viewing this list of questions you are not confident about answering them then you should elect to go on the training.

Best regards,

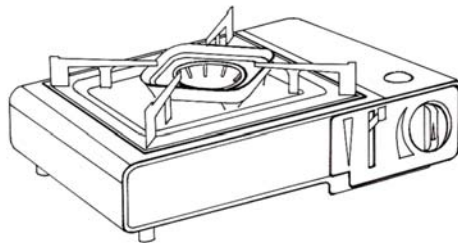


Graham Watts, **BSS Manager**

**PORTABLE GAS STOVE SAFETY ALERT**

A safety alert has been issued to boaters about portable gas cookers with integral gas canisters following incidents where people have been seriously burnt. The Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) is with Hampshire County Council through its Trading Standards service, urging boat owners to take extra care to follow the manufacturers' operating instructions for these stoves and to not use them onboard boats.

The message relates to the widely available and relatively cheap, small, portable stoves with a compartment for an aerosol type gas canister. The stoves have a generally flat profile and are mostly a square or rectangular shape which is about the size of a brief case or cereal box.



With some of these stoves, it is possible to use the appliance with the pan support or spill tray the wrong way up. This is especially relevant to those models which fit in their carry cases with the pan support or spill tray upside down. A number of accidents onshore in the UK have happened because the pan supports were not the right way up when the cooker is being used.

"It seems that with the pan support upside down and the burner on, heat is transferred onto the aerosol type gas canister in the body of the stove and after a time, the canister can burst causing a violent explosion and fireball", said Leader of Hampshire County Council, Councillor Ken Thornber.

"Reading and following the manufacturers' instructions is critical to the safe operation and avoiding the risk of an explosion", he advised.

BSS manager, Graham Watts added, "We are also concerned to ensure boaters stay safe from potential gas leaks from these appliances. While the numbers of boat incidents involving aerosol gas canister stoves are still few, they can be dangerous. We are urging boaters not to use these portable cookers in the poorly ventilated, tight confines of a boat. Even before using them ashore, people need to check the assembly and seals very carefully."

He added "If all you want is a hot drink onboard a day boat, a flask is probably the simplest and safest way. Where a simple cooker is needed aboard, think about installing a marine spirit stove as an alternative to a portable gas cooker."

While inland waterway regulations do not ban these cookers, when not in operation, the stove and all gas canisters must be stowed in lockers that are self-draining, or on open deck areas where any leaking gas will flow overboard and not where it could cause a pool of explosive vapour inside the boat.

The advice from the BSS and Hampshire County Council Trading Standards is, before you use a portable gas cooker with integral gas canister, please follow these important safety points:

- **Only use the cooker onshore.**
- **Stow the canisters, used or unused and the stove if it has a canister inserted, in a *self-draining* gas locker, or on open deck where any escaping gas can flow overboard.**
- **Check the cooker's condition before each use, if the gas canister seal looks damaged, or if the cooker or gas canister is extremely rusty and deteriorated, do not use it.**
- **Familiarise yourself with the operating instructions before use.**
- **Check if the pan support / spill tray must be turned over after removal from the carry case, to the correct cooking position.**
- **Ensure that you have the correct type of gas canister for your appliance and that it is being inserted in the right place and in the right way.**
- **Do not force the gas canister retaining lever into position. It could damage the mechanical linkage and the pressure relief device.**
- **If you have problems with the retaining lever, check that the pan support / spill tray and gas canister have been correctly installed.**
- **If you still have problems with the lever OR if you have further problems or concerns, do not attempt to light the cooker.**
- **If you smell or hear gas leaking before attempting to light it, don't use it.**
- **If any gas is leaking, ensure that it is being dispersed in free air well away from the boat or any sparks or other sources of ignition.**

**– ENDS –**