Gas Safety

Keeping you and your family safe in your home



Ashford Borough Council

What is Ashford Borough Council doing to help keep my family safe?

As your landlord, we have a legal duty of care to repair and maintain the gas pipe work, flues and appliances within your home, in a safe condition. We will carry out an annual Gas Safety Check and Service in your home, performed by a qualified gas engineer. *Does not include resident owned appliances, though a safety check on these will be carried out.

What are the risks of unsafe gas appliances?

Three main risks can arise from having an unsafe gas appliance in your home:

- Gas leaks – During a gas safety check, the engineer will inspect the gas pipework, check appliances are working safely and perform a pressure test to confirm there are no leaks.
- Fires and explosions – Gas is highly combustible. Should gas leak from an appliance or pipework there is a risk of it igniting causing a fire or explosion.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning – Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas that can be especially deadly because you can't see, taste or smell it. CO detectors fitted in your home will sound an alarm when they sense dangerous levels of the gas in the atmosphere.

I don't use gas or have a gas supply, why do I still need a Safety Check?

We still require access to ensure you are still not connected to the gas supply, check any existing pipework and record these details. At the same time the engineer will inspect and test your smoke alarms and if you also live in a high-rise block, carry out a visual inspection of the fire sprinklers in your home.

How is the Gas Safety Check appointment made?

Our registered contractor, Swale Heating, complete gas safety checks on our behalf. When it is due, they will write to you with an appointment date.

If the appointment is inconvenient, you can phone them directly to change it.

If you are not home when they call, a card will be left showing another appointment for the following week and the option to re-arrange if inconvenient. *The Councils compliance access process allows for minor appointment changes

What happens if I don't allow the gas engineer access?

Failure to allow access is a breach of your tenancy and if necessary, legal action will be taken to gain access to the property.

You will be recharged for the costs of obtaining a warrant (£80) and if access to the property is still denied further costs will charged for forced entry.

If you have an external gas meter and we have made repeated unsuccessful attempts to gain access, for your safety, we will isolate the gas supply so that it cannot be used until the safety check has been completed.

How can I prepare for a Gas Safety Check?

The check takes approximately an hour and in preparation for your gas safety check, please:

- Have enough credit if you have a pre-payment gas and/ or electric meter to allow the safety check to be completed.
- Ensure the engineer can easily access the boiler, radiators, airing cupboard and gas meter.
- Turn off the gas boiler and all other gas appliances at least 1 hour before the engineer is due to call, to ensure the system has cooled down sufficiently to be worked on.

During the visit an adult should be present and children and pets should not enter the areas where the safety checks are being completed.

What will be checked during the Gas Safety Check?

A gas appliance safety check ensures an appliance is:

- Properly set and adjusted so the gas burns correctly.
- Suitable for the room it's located in.
- Physically stable, securely fitted and properly connected to the gas pipework.
- Provided with adequate and permanent air supply, suitable for the appliance installed.

The engineer will also ensure:

- All safety devices are functioning properly.
- Any flues, chimneys and air vents are operating correctly.
- The installation is in good condition by visually inspecting the pipework as far as reasonably practicable.
- The gas pipework is tested to ensure there are no leaks.

In addition to the above, the engineer will service the gas boiler as detailed in the manufacturer's instructions. These may include:

- Analysis of the combustion exhaust gases to ensure the appliance is burning gas safely
- A check of the appliance's condition including signs of heat or distress, effectiveness of seals and gaskets, and cleanliness of heat exchangers.
- Ensuring a working CO detector is fitted in each room that has a gas appliance.

If new parts or further repairs are required, Swale Heating will arrange another appointment to carry out the services.

How do I know if the gas engineer is Gas Safe registered?

All Swale Heating engineers carry a Gas Safe register ID card with a unique licence number and details of what they are qualified to work on.

We instruct third party auditors, Gas Contract Services Ltd (GCS), who complete regular quality audits to ensure engineer qualifications are up to date and standards of work and documentation are maintained. They may contact you after a safety check or a new boiler installation, to carry out an on-site inspection.

How can I reduce the risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced during the combustion of natural gas, oil and solid fuels such as coal or wood. It can increase to dangerous levels when a gas appliance has been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained.

There are steps that you can take to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning in your home:

- Test the CO alarm regularly.
- The most important thing you can do is to ensure that your gas appliances are safety checked annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
- Swale Heating will inspect your CO alarm during the safety check and replace with a new unit should it be defective or due to expire. Never tamper or remove the alarm from its location.
- Gas cookers, hobs and burners produce a blue flame which signifies they are burning safely. A yellow or orange flame could signify a fault and the appliance should be turned off and checked by a gas qualified engineer.
- Ensure ventilation holes or air bricks are not obstructed or blocked.
- Never use any room with an open fire place or gas fire to sleep in.
- Never use portable gas heaters or BBQ's inside.

What should I do if I can smell gas?

If you think you can smell gas, it's important that you follow these steps:

- Turn off the gas at the meter using the emergency control valve (ECV).
- Put out all naked flames, including cigarettes
- Open windows and doors to air the property.
- Do not use any electrical appliances by turning them on or off. This includes doorbells, phones and light switches.
- Call the National Gas Emergency number on 0800 111 999

National Gas Emergency Freephone 0800 111 999

They will talk you through their safety procedure and arrange for their SGN engineer to visit within an hour. If your home has a door intercom system please open the door manually when the engineer arrives.

The SGN engineer will ensure that the gas supply is safe but they will not carry out any repairs.

After their visit it is important that you report the problem to our registered heating contractor.

Swale Heating Freephone 0800 987 4034

After you have called the National Gas Emergency Freephone, call Swale Heating to register a repair visit.

ABC Freephone is 0800 206 1371
ABC landline 01795 503362

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for gas safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

housing.compliance@ashford.gov.uk

01233 331111