



News release

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TIMETABLE AGREED FOR LPG PIPEWORK REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

A high-level plan for the replacement of underground metallic service pipework carrying liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in England, Scotland and Wales has been agreed.

Industry representative body, UKLPG, met the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) yesterday to agree the plan. Although replacement work has already started, once a survey to prioritise premises is finished, this will be ramped up from October 2009.

Businesses with buried metallic service pipework, which can corrode over time, will be required to replace it with more durable materials, such as polyethylene.

The oldest buried metallic service pipework in the least well-maintained condition and located in the most corrosive soils will be targeted first. Higher risk pipework is targeted to be replaced by the end of 2013.

Rob Shuttleworth, UKLPG's Chief Executive said:

"The plan agreed reflects the importance placed upon safety by the LPG industry, and its commitment to work with its customers and HSE to understand and prioritise the replacement of underground metallic pipework carrying liquefied petroleum gas to industrial and commercial premises."

Geoffrey Podger, HSE's Chief Executive, said:

"The agreement of the plan will give all parties – customers, suppliers, service companies, the industry and us as regulators – confidence about timetable we are working to. HSE will continue to work with the industry to ensure that risks are identified and appropriate action is taken to reduce or remove them."

A number of factors are being addressed to ensure the target date can be met:

- The industry is currently undertaking on a survey that will help to prioritise the replacement programme for the pipework.
- Next steps will include a training programme to increase the number of qualified Gas Safe engineers available to carry out the replacement work. Discussions have already taken place with Gas Safe Register and the Safety Skills councils to put into place a fast track process for increasing the number of qualified engineers.

The plan will be reviewed in light of the data from the prioritisation survey, progress on engineer resource availability and the publication of Lord Gill's report into the explosion at ICL Plastics Ltd in Glasgow in May 2004, which was caused by an LPG leak.

Responsibility for ensuring the safety and maintenance and replacement in industrial LPG pipework will normally rest with site operators – including landlords, site owners or business directors – although it can also fall to gas suppliers if they own the pipe.

Site operators are legally responsible for complying with safety regulations.

LPG is safe when stored and used in compliance with the relevant health and safety legislation, standards and industry codes of practice, such as those produced by UKLPG.

Notes to editors

1. UKLPG is the trade association for the LPG industry in the UK, representing companies who are producers, distributors, equipment and service providers, and vehicle converters. UKLPG was formed by the merger of the LP Gas Association (LPGA) and the Association for Liquid Gas Equipment and Distributors (ALGED) in January 2008. Its roots are firmly established, with LPGA and ALGED established in 1947 and 1975 respectively. It is dedicated to the safe and effective development of LPG and takes a leading role in the consultation and negotiation with legislators and policy makers.
2. The Health and Safety Executive is the national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to prevent death, injury and ill health in Great Britain's workplaces.
3. UKLPG publishes a wide range of codes of practice, see www.uklpg.org.

Press enquiries

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For further information about the survey and programme please visit
www.hse.gov.uk/gas/lpg.htm