

The regulation of gas installations in South Africa

Electricity is no longer cheap for South Africans. Gas is a viable alternative and has the ability to satisfy South Africa's hunger for a safe and efficient alternative energy. This article discusses the necessity for the regulation of gas installations in order to ensure optimum safety practices are adhered to.

As gas usage increases in South African homes and businesses, awareness needs to be drawn to the safe practice of working with, installing and storing gas. As an electrician would need to be certified, so does a gas installer (Gas Practitioner).

The South African Qualification and Certification Committee for Gas (SAQCC Gas) is mandated by the Department of Labour to ensure all gas practitioners are trained and certified through the four different gas associations.

These are:

- **LPGASASA** – Liquefied Petroleum Gas Safety Association of Southern Africa
- **SACGA** – Southern Africa Compressed Gases Association
- **SARACCA** – South African Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Contractors Association
- **SAGA** – Southern African Gas Association

Each association plays a vital role in ensuring compliance with the safety regulations within their specific gas markets/industries. In South Africa there are four main gas industries that are regulated by the Department of Labour, they are; Natural Gas, Liquefied Petroleum Gas, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Gas and Compressed Industrial and Medical Gases.

If you work with gas installations you need to be a registered gas practitioner with SAQCC Gas, the body which is mandated to register all gas practitioners.

HOMEOWNERS AND TRANSFERS

When having gas installed in your home, you are required by law to use a certified gas practitioner and request a certificate of conformity (COC) once the work has been completed. The COC is required for all gas type installations. As home ownership

transfer requires Electrical Compliance Certification, so would any fixed installation of air conditioning units and/or gas lines, equipment and appliances.

BUSINESS AND GAS INSTALLATIONS

Similar to homeowners, business owners must also request a COC from a registered gas practitioner. In many instances, installers are working without certification, which means they may not know how to operate with the type of gas your business is using.

Liability for any harm or safety contravention would then fall on the business owner, not the insurance company. Furthermore, company owners would not be able to apply for any compensation aid or benefit for employees who are hurt or for life loss.

REGULATE GAS INSTALLATIONS

Gas is a safe product to work with. It is predictable and can be easily transported or transferred from one point to the other. The varieties of uses for gas are endless and what makes gas attractive to many, is its availability. Worldwide gas production is in surplus, with many gases being naturally extracted.

WHY IS REGULATION REQUIRED?

A large percentage of gas incidents are as a result of human error.

The number of uncertified gas installers is growing and many home and business owners are not requesting proof of registration. All registered practitioners have a license card (similar to our driver's license) which is issued by the SAQCC Gas and carries the installer's name, photograph, unique SAQCC Gas number (QCC#) as well as the type of gas with which the installer is permitted to work.

Consumers should also insist on a Certificate of Conformity (COC) from the practitioner on completion of the installation. This is the practitioner's confirmation that the installation is compliant with all relevant regulations and national safety standards. No license and/or no COC would render the installation illegal and potentially unsafe.

Incidents resulting from poor installation can vary from property to damage to loss of life and it is essential that all gas consumers request the above. To confirm whether or not a practitioner is registered, one can also check the information provided on the SAQCC Gas website: www.saqccgas.co.za



SAQCC Gas is a non profit company that has been formed by its four Member Associations to establish a central database which displays details of registered and authorised gas practitioners to work on gas and gas systems.

The SAQCC Gas has been officially appointed and mandated by the Department of Labour to register gas practitioners, on their behalf, within the following gas industries:

- Natural Gas
- Liquefied Petroleum Gas
- Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Gas
- Compressed Industrial and Medical Gases



John Parr Chairman Email: john@52eng.co.za Tel: 011-792-8001 Website: www.saqccgas.co.za