

# More participation in safety scheme ensures safe gas use

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Despite strict safety compliance procedures, industries that use coal-fired or electrical equipment are slowly realising the benefits of using gas-fired equipment instead.

South African Gas Association (Saga) chairperson **Roy Lubbe** says this is evident with more companies seeing the benefits of participating in its Safe Gas Equipment Scheme (SGES).

The SGES, established in 2011, ensures that all gas-related industrial equipment installed in South Africa has been tested and

conforms with international or nationally accepted standards.

"In particular, the scheme helps to avoid lethal incidents, such as the methane gas leakage that claimed six lives in February at the naval base in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal," he points out.


Lubbe adds that all industrial equipment that has been declared appropriate for use within a gas system will be provided with a Saga equipment verification permit, which is issued to the manufacturer or importer as proof of conformity.

"Having equipment conform to international and/or national safety standards is key to an effective and efficient gas system. The SGES also ensures that equipment of

inferior or unsuitable quality is not imported into South Africa or used in the marketplace," he points out.

However, boiler and burner installation company Combustion Technology MD **Grant Renecke** says converting to using gas is slow in taking off in the field of industrial applications, owing to many companies being oblivious to their electrical or coal expenses and, therefore, continue to use existing forms of power, rather than determining their associated operating costs. "Often, there exist valid financial and environmental grounds to switch to natural gas, and industry needs to pay attention to this," he adds.

Lubbe affirms that, in most cases, industry stakeholders are consulted in terms of whether the equipment is of superior quality, fit for purpose and safe before the equipment is sold locally. He adds out that companies are informed of gas often being cheaper, more efficient and environment friendly, but warns that gas can be dangerous to use if not operated properly, which "could also be a contributing factor to the slow uptake of gas in industry applications".

Proper research on what type of equipment is suited for a companies' needs, is, therefore, important when converting to gas, Lubbe concludes. 

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Junk is the stuff we throw away,  
and stuff is the junk we keep.