

Lucky to be alive: NHS worker urging everyone to get a safe gas check

An NHS worker who had a lucky escape after an engineer carried out unsafe work on his house is urging everyone to get a proper gas safety check in time for winter.

Anaesthetic practitioner Tony Deyn unwittingly used an unregistered gas engineer to carry out work on his Cheshire home. The work was so bad it could have caused an explosion.



Tony Deyn

Now Tony is urging others to make sure they use a registered engineer to carry out an annual gas check. This is especially important ahead of winter when households will be using more gas.

Tony Deyn, 58, who works at Crewe's Leighton Hospital, had a boiler replaced at his house in Winsford. But the work was carried out by an engineer not on the official Gas Safe Register.

After weeks of leaks from his boiler in his family home in Winsford, Tony called out a registered engineer who found a series of faults – some of which could have led to a serious gas leak and explosion.

Tony said: "I believed the engineer who replaced our boiler was qualified. Unfortunately, that was not the case. We had a series of problems so got a registered engineer out to the house who was shocked at what he found.

"It seems we were fortunate there wasn't a serious leak. Me, my family, even my neighbours, are lucky to be alive.

"I know the cost of living is going through the roof right now, but this is one area you can't afford to cut corners on. It's really important to get a

gas check and make sure it is done by a registered engineer.”

The contractor who carried out the original work at Tony’s house has since been prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). He was given a 40-week suspended sentence, 200 hours community service and ordered to pay costs of £5,263.

On the inspection of the work carried out, five separate serious defects were found. Any of these defects could have resulted in fatal consequences, from gas explosion, carbon monoxide exposure or scalding.

HSE recommends homeowners get gas appliances boilers, cookers, fires, flues, and pipework serviced every year by a qualified engineer listed on the Gas Safe Register.

The Gas Safe Register is the official list of gas businesses registered to work on gas appliances. By law, anyone working with gas must be listed on the register.

A registered engineer will check appliances are safe but also that they’re running efficiently – saving householders money.

Tony Deyn added: “What happened to us shows how things can go wrong. The work we had carried out put our lives at risk.”

Tony’s warning comes as the clocks go back this weekend (October 30) when people often start using more gas in their homes.

There have been several gas incidents involving households this year. HSE says people need to be careful but not concerned. Gas incidents can be devastating but remain extremely rare. There were 25 gas related fire and explosion incidents reported in 2020/2021, despite there being over 22 million households using gas across the country. □

□John Rowe, HSE policy lead for gas safety, said: “Gas is an incredibly safe way of fuelling your house and by carrying out simple checks we can all keep Great Britain gas safe.

“Carbon monoxide poisoning affects over a thousand people each year and can be fatal so we’re encouraging householders to get a gas check. Doing so could save them money in the long run but will also keep them safe.”

Help is available for those struggling to pay for checks. In some circumstances, suppliers can offer free gas safety checks through the Priority Services Register. For further advice and information homeowners can contact their gas supplier (the company they pay their bills to).

Find out more about the [Gas Safe Register](#) and for more information on gas health and safety visit HSE’s [website](#).

Notes to editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator

for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. hse.gov.uk

2. HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Tips to keep gas safe:

1. Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix and service your appliances. You can find and check an engineer at GasSafeRegister.co.uk or call 0800 408 5500.
2. Know the six signs of carbon monoxide poisoning – headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness.
3. Check gas appliances for warning signs that they are not working properly - lazy yellow flames instead of crisp blue ones, black marks or stains on or around the appliance and condensation in the room.
4. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm. This will alert you if there is carbon monoxide in your home.
5. Check both sides of your engineer's Gas Safe Register ID card. Make sure they are qualified for the work you need doing. You can find this information on the back of the card.
6. Have all your gas appliances regularly serviced and safety checked every year. If you rent your home, ask for a copy of the landlord's current Gas Safety Record.
7. If you smell gas call 0800 111 999. More information on what to do if you smell gas can be found at: [What To Do in a Gas Emergency – Gas Safe Register](#)