

Suspended prison sentence for builder over gas safety failures

A builder has avoided an immediate spell behind bars after being convicted of carrying out gas work at a property in Berkshire when he was not qualified to do so.

Thomas Murray, who traded as Kerbgold Design and Construction Ltd, was given an eight-month prison sentence which was suspended for 18 months.

Reading Crown Court heard how Murray had been contracted to manage a large-scale renovation and extension of a property in Maidenhead in July 2018. The project involved significant gas work, including the installation of a gas boiler, relocation of a gas meter and the installation of associated pipework for both.

Further information and guidance on [domestic gas health and safety](#) is available.

However, the project over ran and the householders had to return to the property in January 2019, where they soon reported the smell of gas. Murray carried out a test which detected no gas leak.

As their concerns persisted, the homeowners contacted a Gas Safe Registered engineer to inspect the installation. The engineer found a gas leak and other faults within the installation. In addition, Cadent Gas, the gas supplier to the property, had never been notified about the relocation of the meter and pipework. The pipework leading to the meter was found to have been laid to incorrect depth and fittings suitable only for water pipework had been found to have been used throughout the installation.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that although Murray arranged for a Gas Safe engineer to install the boiler, they had only connected the water plumbing and left the property due to concerns being raised. In a bid to allow the homeowners to access hot water and heating, Murray decided to undertake some of the gas work himself as a temporary fix.

Murray, of Heath End Road, Flackwell Heath, Buckinghamshire, pleaded guilty to breaching section 3(2) of the Health Safety at Work Act 1974 and was sentenced to eight months in prison, suspended for 18 months. He was also ordered to complete 250 hours unpaid work.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Karen Morris said: "In this case, Mr Murray was responsible for overseeing the gas work, which was not finished and had left householders and their neighbours at risk from the dangers and effects of leaking gas.

"To make matters worse, he decided to try and finish the job himself, despite not being competent to do so.

“His failures could have led to catastrophic and tragic consequences.

“We will not hesitate to prosecute builders who fail to ensure that gas work under their control is conducted safely using Gas Safe Registered engineers.”

Gas engineers and consumers can contact the Gas Safe Register in any of these ways:

- [Gas Safe Register](#)
- Phone – **Consumers:** 0800 408 5500; **Engineers:** 0800 408 5577
- Email – enquiries@gassaferegister.co.uk

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.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Further information on [domestic gas health and safety](#) is available.