

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](#)

Building contractor and director fined after fire risk failings

A building contractor has been fined £600,000 and its director has been ordered to complete 100 hours of unpaid work and fined £4,200 following serious and repeated failings in managing the risk of fire during work at a construction site.

In January 2018 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) undertook a proactive inspection to investigate health and safety failings by S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited at a construction site at Regent House, Brentwood, Essex after a concern was raised that people were sleeping on site.

The subsequent HSE investigation, which was assisted by Essex Fire & Rescue Service, identified failings in fire management at the site which created risks to workers and members of the public who were visiting show flats outside of business hours.

The environment at Regent House was poorly managed and the construction work was being carried out in an unsafe manner which could have resulted in a fire.

S&S Quality Building Contractors had previously been subject to HSE interventions after risks of a fire had been identified across a number of sites over several years. Evidence gathered during the proactive HSE investigation indicated that the company director Shlomo Pines regularly attended the Regent House site and failed to implement improvements from previous HSE interventions.

S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited of Hawthorn Business Park, Granville Road, London, pleaded guilty to breaching 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £600,000 and ordered to pay costs of £36,894 at Basildon Crown Court on 25 October 2022.

Company director Shlomo Pines, of St. Johns Road, Golders Green, London pleaded guilty to contravening Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He received a community order to complete 100 hours of unpaid work and was fined £4,200.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Prentiss Clarke-Jones said: “S&S Quality Building Contractors Limited completely ignored the importance of fire safety measures on a construction site led by a director who wilfully chose to ignore the risks despite evidence he knew how to make things safe. This unsurprisingly resulted in a site where risks were also ignored by his workers.

“Follow the guidance, get competent advice and take responsibility that the law requires at the very least, or someone may get hurt, which thankfully did not eventuate here.”

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. hse.gov.uk^[1]
 2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk^[2]
 3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
 4. Read more about Fire Safety in Construction: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg168.htm>
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HSE now leading investigation into death of Louis Watkiss

The investigation into the death of a child at Tamworth SnowDome has now been formally handed over to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

A joint investigation was launched at the time of the tragic incident, led by Staffordshire Police. Following the handover, HSE will now lead the criminal investigation.

Twelve-year-old Louis Watkiss was in a toboggan when it collided with one of the snow centre's employees on Friday, 24 September, 2021. Louis suffered fatal injuries in the collision.

Andrew Johnson, Principal Inspector at HSE, said: "We continue to prioritise and thoroughly investigate the death of Louis, to establish any breaches of health and safety law.

"We are in regular contact with Louis' family."

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New podcast for the construction industry

A podcast for the construction industry has been launched this week by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Supporting the *Work Right Construction: Your Health. Your Future* campaign, this new episode discusses the impact and the prevention of the serious aches, pains and strains that can affect every part of a construction worker's life.

In the episode, Matt Birtles, Principal Ergonomics and Human Factors Consultant at HSE, which is Great Britain's workplace regulator, and Peter Crosland, National Civil Engineering Director at the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA), talk about what the construction industry can

do to promote change and protect its workforce.

Last year, 40,000 construction workers reported suffering with serious aches, pains and strains, more formally known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

The conversation covers the impact that these injuries can have on workers, employers' legal responsibilities and the sensible control measures that can be introduced regardless of the size of the construction site.

The podcast launches as HSE inspectors carry out 1,000 inspections this month and next, checking how workers are moving heavy or bulky materials.

Matt said that if moving and lifting is managed properly, a physical job on a building site should not result in aches, pains and strains which affect every part of workers' lives.

He said: "They can struggle to get themselves dressed and undressed, they can be unable to pick up their children or grandchildren.

"They can struggle to sit down and stand up, they can struggle to keep still and move around. The most intimate parts of their lives can be severely affected – they might be desperate to go the toilet but find themselves unable.

"It's not something that many people feel comfortable talking about, perhaps particularly on a building site, but if your back has gone or if you're in agony whenever you move your arms, measures need to be put in place to address the causes."

- Listen to the podcast here:
<https://hsepodcast.podbean.com/e/manual-handling-in-construction/>
- Find out more and download free HSE resources, including an MSDs poster here:
<https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/workright-construction-your-health-your-future>

Update – Oakwood Theme Park – 11am **24/10/22**

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is investigating an incident on the Treetops rollercoaster at Oakwood Theme Park in Pembrokeshire. The incident took place on Sunday October 23.

The park is currently closed to the public.

Sian Clayton, HSE's head of operations in Wales, said: "Our inspectors are investigating an incident on the Treetops rollercoaster at Oakwood Theme Park. We will provide more information when we can."

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