

Gas Safety Alert

Clearances from walls for high energy commercial catering equipment

As of 24 November 2016, gas applications involving high energy appliances that have no thermostatic control, extended usage patterns and where the flue products discharge near or adjacent to a wall containing a combustible surface will require those appliances to be installed with a **minimum 50 mm clearance** from the adjacent surface.

Background

Over the past year Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) investigated a number of commercial kitchen fires located in the walls adjacent to the commercial catering equipment. The results of independent testing found that all but four fire-resistant materials used in gas installations failed to meet the level of thermal protection required by AS/NZS 5601.1:2013. ESV has worked with industry to ensure that only products with the correct thermal characteristics are being used for the purpose of protecting combustible surfaces behind commercial catering equipment.

A recent fire in a commercial kitchen has again raised concerns over the effectiveness of Appendix C of AS/NZS 5601.1:2013 for certain commercial catering equipment. Of particular concern are high energy appliances that have no thermostatic control, extended usage patterns and where the flue products discharge near or adjacent to a wall.

Condition of Acceptance

As a result, and pursuant to Section 73 of the Gas Safety Act, ESV has determined that as of 24 November 2016 a condition of acceptance for **all** gas applications involving high energy appliances that have no thermostatic control, extended usage patterns and where the flue products discharge near or adjacent to a wall (typically heating water including but not limited to; brat pans, target tops, noodle cookers and waterless pot steamers) will state the following:

- the appliance must be installed to meet the manufacturers requirements for clearances from combustible surfaces; or
- the appliance installed adjacent to a combustible surface protected in accordance with Appendix C of AS/NZS 5601.1:2013 must have a minimum clearance of 50 mm from the appliance to the adjacent surface. A method of ensuring this clearance is maintained must be provided in the gas installation.

Relevant Legislation

s. 73 Acceptance of gas installation:

(1) A person who carries out work on a complex gas installation or on a standard gas installation of a prescribed class must apply to Energy Safe Victoria for acceptance of the gas installation before the gas installation is commissioned.

(3) Energy Safe Victoria must notify the applicant in writing of its decision – (a) to accept the gas installation; or (b) to accept the gas installation subject to the conditions specified by Energy Safe Victoria.

(6) If Energy Safe Victoria accepts a gas installation subject to certain conditions, the acceptance takes effect when the conditions are complied with.

Acceptance process for commercial kitchens

For new applications of acceptance received after 24 November 2016, the conditions of acceptance issued by ESV will specify the requirements of this technical bulletin.

For applications of acceptance received on or before 24 November 2016, the site inspection will identify issues related to this technical bulletin and a formal request (via a request for information letter) will be made with the applicant to meet the requirements of this bulletin.

The request for information will state the following:

To ensure the safety of the gas installation, the following requirements need to be met for < specify appliance and location> before acceptance of the gas installation can occur.

The appliance must be installed to meet the manufacturer's requirements for clearances from combustible surfaces or the appliance installed adjacent to a combustible surface protected in accordance with Appendix C of AS/NZS 5601.1:2013 must have a minimum clearance of 50mm from the appliance to the adjacent surface. A method of ensuring this clearance is maintained must be provided in the gas installation.

Please notify ESV when the above requirements are met and ESV will be able to finalise the processing of your application and grant acceptance.

ESV would encourage all gasfitters to raise this matter with their existing and future clients and strongly encourage them to install high energy appliances in line with the requirements of this bulletin.

Further information

If any further information or clarification on this matter is required by yourself or your client, please do not hesitate to contact ESV's Technical Advice Line on 1800 652 563 (free-call) or by email at gastechnicalenquiry@energysafe.vic.gov.au.



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