



LP GAS: BE INFORMED AND BE SAFE

Advice from the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Safety Association of South Africa

Over the past couple of years, the uncertainty of a sustainable supply of electricity plus the ever increasing cost of electricity has led to consumers looking for a suitable alternative energy source.

The Department of Energy and Eskom are now also encouraging the public to use LPGas as an alternative energy for cooking and the heating of water and space.

Consumers are also becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of LPGas and the fact that, used correctly, it is an efficient and safe energy carrier and of the fact that it is readily available here and now.



From a consumer's perspective, there are three main areas which they need to be aware of when considering using LPGas, all of which are requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act) and the Pressure Equipment Regulations (PER): **The Appliance, The Installer, and The Cylinder**

The Appliance

In terms of appliances the OHS Act requires that any LPGas appliance distributed or sold in South Africa must comply with the relevant

National Standard, in this instance SANS 1539. In terms of SANS 1539, appliances must be tested at an accredited test house and if they are found to comply with the Standard, the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Safety Association of South Africa (LPGSASA) will issue a Verification Permit which has its own unique number. The brand, model, description, etc is then listed on the LPGSASA website.

All verified appliances must carry the Verification Permit Number and the LPGSASA Safe Appliance logo on either the product itself, or the packaging or the instruction manual. If an appliance does not have the Permit Verification Number and the Safe Appliance logo, consumers should not purchase it or allow it to be installed. For further information, visit the Safe Appliance Scheme section on our website: www.lpgas.co.za

The Installer

In Terms of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Pressure Equipment Regulations require that all Gas installations may only be carried out by a competent person, registered by an organisation approved by the Chief Inspector of the Department of Labour. Registered installers are issued with an identity card bearing their photograph and registration number. The card also carries their name and grade, i.e. Domestic, Commercial, Industrial or Autogas. Consumers are strongly advised to ask the installer to present their card before allowing work to commence.

Installers are required to issue a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) after completion and commissioning of a gas installation and have to instruct the end-user on the safe operation of the installed appliance(s) and gas system, before handing over the installation. The insurance industry has been informed of the requirements of the Pressure Equipment Regulations (PER), and if a homeowner is not in possession of a Certificate of Conformity it is likely that any damage resulting from the LPGas installation will not be covered by their insurance.

For a list of all Registered LPGas Installers, visit: www.saqccgas.co.za

The Cylinder

Due to a number of individuals and/or companies operating in an unsafe and mostly illegal manner, consumers need to be very aware of where they source their LPGas.



The individuals/companies access LPGas from a refinery and then have to distribute it. As they have not invested in the infrastructure to undertake this operation – including a sufficient stock of their own cylinders – they use cylinders belonging to other companies. They fill these cylinders, which are branded with the owner company's livery (colours, logo, etc) and supply the often unsuspecting consumer.

These cylinders are often overfilled – because the fillers do not use the correct equipment and have not been trained to undertake the operation. An over-filled cylinder could be hazardous if exposed to excessive heat. A properly filled cylinder is only filled to 80% of its capacity, to allow for expansion of the product within the cylinder.

Cylinders are also frequently under-filled, again, due to ignorance and no training but often

intentionally so. Unsuspecting consumers believe they are getting a 'good price' whereas, in reality, they are being cheated.



Under normal circumstances, when an empty cylinder is exchanged via a reputable dealer or company, it is returned to the depot of the owner (brand) of that cylinder where it is thoroughly checked to ensure its integrity and that it is safe to be used. Cylinders filled and distributed by illegal fillers do not get checked and could lead to incidents/accidents.

Should LPGas users wish to ensure that they are purchasing product from a reputable dealer, a list is available on the LPGSASA website: www.lpgas.co.za

A further check for consumers is that filled cylinders have a seal which is shrink-wrapped around the cylinder valve. This seal should always bear the logo of the company which owns the cylinder. The logo should match the logo on the cylinder itself. If the cylinder has a seal which is clear or it has no seal at all, it is a strong indication that it has been illegally filled and the consumer should therefore refuse to accept it.

