

Safety Alert 006

Developed in association with the Metering Industry Sector



Title: Product Safety Alert – Gas meter union washers

Date issued: 11 November 2010

This Safety Alert has been published to highlight a possible gas safety concern in relation to the sealing washers used in the installation of domestic and small non-domestic diaphragm and ultrasonic meter installations, up to and including U40 models

Background

The metering industry sector has made Gas Safe Register aware of a potential problem with the meter washers used with the BS 746⁽¹⁾ meter unions on domestic and small non-domestic diaphragm and ultrasonic gas meter installations, up to and including U40 models.

Initial investigations carried out on a sample of meter installations, suggests that in some cases, after tightening the meter unions or the emergency control valve (ECV) union with tools, e.g. grips/spanners as normal, washers may have had a tendency to 'relax'. This shows itself by the union(s) being able to be undone by hand (without the use of tools and with a reasonable amount of force). From evidence gathered so far, the meter installation sector believes that the risk of a gas escape occurring from this phenomenon is considered to be low.

It is not clear how widespread the problem may be. For this reason, **all** primary and secondary meter installations supplied by natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or LPG/Air should be regarded as suspect.

It is recommended that the following procedure is applied whenever **any** work involving disconnection and reconnection of either the ECV union or any of the meter unions e.g. meter disconnection prior to 'hot work' is carried out.

Actions – Gas Safe registered engineer

- (a) Following a satisfactory gas tightness test, after a period of approximately 10 minutes, check the meter unions and the union connected to the outlet of the ECV, to see if they can be undone by hand.
- (b) If the unions can be undone by hand, the installation should be made safe and classified as 'Immediately Dangerous' ('ID') in accordance with the current Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure (GIUSP) (IGEM/G/11) and in the case of primary meters the relevant Gas Supplier should be informed immediately.
- (c) It is important that the registered engineer clearly records all actions and test results relating to this issue in addition to any other test results relating to work undertaken on their own job record/documentation.

Identifying the Gas Supplier

There are approximately 32 Gas Suppliers (GS) licensed to supply NG in Great Britain (GB). All Gas Suppliers are licensed by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem).

Each premise in GB that has a NG mains supply has a 'meter point reference number' (MPRN), or 'M' number and in some circumstances more than one MPRN. The MPRN is unique to the premise and does not change if a different GS is chosen or if the consumer moves.

The MPRN should not be confused with the GS's gas account number or the meter serial number printed on the meter itself. The MPRN should be printed on the consumer's gas bill. Most GSs print the MPRN on either the front or reverse of the first page of their gas bills. Some recent gas meter installations have the MPRN clearly identified on the meter itself, however this practice is quite rare. Alternatively, it may be written on a 'Service Information Label' (SIL – a small yellow tag) attached adjacent to the ECV. The format of a MPRN is quite standard and consists of between 6 and 10 numerical digits only.

If the MPRN is not on the gas meter, the SIL, or on the bill, it will be necessary to identify the MPRN for the property. To do this, it will be necessary for the registered business/engineer to contact the automated '**M' Number Enquiry Line Service** on **0870 608 1524**, it will require the premise's post code and first line of the address in order to access the information required which also includes the details of the current GS. Following receipt of the MPRN number the relevant GS will need to be contacted in order to report the gas meter union washer concern.

Note 1: For guidance on NG meter installations in other geographical areas covered by Gas Safe Register, contact should be made with the relevant Gas Transporter/Gas Supplier.

Note 2: In the case of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) meter installations, reference should be made to the LPG supplier, the contact details of which will normally be found on the bulk storage vessel, cylinder, or at the meter.

Bibliography

(1) BS 746 Specification for gas meter unions and adaptors

(2) IGEN/G/11 – The Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure

Note: Gas Safe Register Technical Bulletins can be viewed at: <https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/sign-in/> - login and visit the Technical Information area.

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