



SAFETY ALERT

Product Safety Alert – gas meter union washers

Number: SA 08/10

Strategy & Policy Directorate Sponsor: Robin Cawthorne

Date of issue: 09 Dec 10

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Who Should Read this: CEStOs, Top Level Budget Holders, MOD Project Managers, SETLs & SEATs, Organisations appointing Authorising Engineers (AE) including: Commanding Officers/Heads of Establishment, Defence Estates (DE) Deputy Heads (Estates), DHE, DTE, DE Intl, DE Advisors and Maintenance Management Organisations.

When it takes effect: Immediately

When it is due to expire: 31 Dec 11

1. Document aim.
 - a. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONTENTS OF THIS ALERT WILL ENABLE COMPLIANCE WITH THE HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ETC ACT 1974 AND ITS SUBORDINATE REGULATIONS.
 - b. The appropriate MOD officer shall arrange for the RPC/ Maintenance Management Organisation (MMO) contractor to carry out all actions in accordance with this Alert.
 - c. Any work required as a result of this Safety Alert must be carried out in accordance with JSP 375 Volume 3 – MOD’s Safety Rules & Procedures
 - d. On MOD Establishments occupied by United States Visiting Forces (USVF) responsibility is jointly held by USVF and DE (USF). At base level this jointly managed organisation is to take appropriate action to implement the contents of this Alert. Where this Alert contains procedures which differ significantly from USVF practice DE (USF) code of practice will be issued

2. Background:

Gas Safe Register has been made aware of a potential problem with the washers used with the BS 746 meter unions and/or the emergency control valve unions on domestic and small non-domestic diaphragm and ultrasonic gas meter installations, up to and including U40 models.

Sample testing of some installations has found that, in some cases, the washers can 'relax' a short while after the unions have been tool-tightened. This manifests as the union becoming hand-tight. From evidence gathered so far, it is considered that there is a low risk of an escape of gas.

It is not known how widespread the problem may be. For this reason, Gas Safe are recommending that all primary and secondary meter installations, as referenced above, should be regarded as suspect. This is for both natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas.

3. Requirement:

Following work to a gas installation and a satisfactory gas tightness test, and after a period of approximately ten minutes, the Gas Safe registered engineer is to check the meter unions and the union connected to the outlet of the emergency control valve, to see if they can be undone by hand.

If the unions can be undone by hand, the installation must be made safe and classified as 'Immediately Dangerous' in accordance with the current Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure. In the case of primary meters, the relevant gas supplier must be informed immediately.

The Gas Safe registered engineer must clearly record all actions and test results relating to the work undertaken.

4. References:

The Gas Safe Register's Safety Alert 006 (issued 11 November 2010) is a Product Safety Alert concerning gas meter union washers.

BS 746 is the specification for gas meter unions and adaptors.

Gas Safe's Technical Bulletin TB001 details the Gas Industry Unsafe Situations Procedure.