

No.	KF52
Policy Title	Gas Safety & Servicing Policy
Date Adopted	August 2022
Review Date	August 2024
Date of Next Review	August 2025



GAS SAFETY & SERVICING POLICY

YEARLY UPDATE

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NEHEMIAH HOUSING

Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear statement of Nehemiah policy on gas safety in domestic and commercial buildings owned and managed by Nehemiah.

It is of vital importance in ensuring the health and safety not just of people who live in Nehemiah properties, but also, those who live in the immediate area, work in, or visit their homes. As a landlord, Nehemiah has a legal responsibility to ensure the safety of its tenants in properties where there are gas installations and appliances. This policy sets out how Nehemiah will fulfil these legal requirements.

Nehemiah currently has 4 commercial boilers within our retirement schemes. Covering 91 retirement properties and linked to the commercial communal boilers. The schemes are Charles Pearson Court extension; Woodside House, Shanti Niketan and Henry Court

Nehemiah now owns and manages 739 properties with gas boilers and radiator systems. This includes 3 & 5 Beacon Court, 109 and 111 Jiggins Lane.

Nehemiah currently has 18 properties with a gas carcass to property or gas cooker only.

Nehemiah has 13 Solar properties over and above gas servicing.

Nehemiah is responsible for ensuring that a Gas Safety Inspection is undertaken within 12 months of the previous inspection or installation of a new appliance in each of those properties.

- 1.2 The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Amendment Regulations 2018 require Nehemiah to undertake a gas safety check of all the domestic gas fittings, flues and appliances in its properties on an annual basis. In addition, Nehemiah will carry out any maintenance/service requirements of its domestic gas fittings, flues and appliances in conjunction with the gas safety check and complete all necessary repairs and replacements promptly.

- 1.3 Nehemiah will, where possible, take account of our customer profile and schedule gas safety checks, services and repairs to our more vulnerable households during the summer months to ensure any inconvenience caused is kept to a minimum as a result of, for example, being unable to use their gas fire because repairs need to be carried out.
- 1.4 Gas Safe registered gas installers will only be used by Nehemiah to carry out any work on its gas fittings, flues and appliances and these items will always be maintained to a safe standard.
- 1.5 All gas safety checks, and servicing will be carried out by prior appointment with the customer. Nehemiah will make every effort to work with customers to gain access at a time, which is mutually convenient.
- 1.6 The gas servicing programme will run over an 10.5 month period (12 month cycle with a 6 week lead in period) to allow for any problems we may have with gaining access into some properties. Consequently, some properties may have two services carried out within a 12 month period.
- 1.7 Appointments can also be made on Saturday mornings if required.
- 1.8 Nehemiah will take all reasonable steps to achieve access and complete a gas safety check annually; however, in incidents where access to the property cannot be obtained or is refused by the customer, we will pursue legal action as necessary in order to fulfil our legal obligation as a landlord.
- 1.9 Nehemiah will issue a copy of the latest safety check record to existing tenants within 28 days of the check being completed, or to any new tenant after the sign-up process is completed.
- 1.10 Nehemiah ensures a CO alarm is required to be fitted in every habitable room of a rental property containing gas appliances Nehemiah will ensure that checks and tests are carried out certify that carbon monoxide alarms in the property are working the day any new tenancy begins and on the yearly inspection.

2. Legislation and regulations

Legislation and Regulations
• The Defective Premises Act 1972
• The Landlord and Customer Act 1985
• The Housing Act 1988
• The Equality Act 2010
• Section 121 of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
• Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
• Gas Safety (Installation and Use) amendment Regulations 2018
• The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
• BS EN 5091

2.1 Guidance

- Gas Safety Guidance for Landlords (2005) Audit Commission
- The Health and Safety Executives Code of Practice on Domestic Gas Safety 2004, and Proposals for Change: procedural requirements

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Gas Appliances: the definition of gas appliances means an appliance designed for use by a consumer of gas for heating, lighting, cooking or other purposes for which gas can be used but it does not include a portable or mobile appliance supplied with gas from a cylinder, or the cylinder, pipes and other fittings used for supplying gas to that appliance. It includes gas boilers, gas fires, gas cookers and hobs.
- 3.2 Gas fittings: gas pipe work, valves, regulators and meters, and fittings, apparatus and appliances designed for heating, lighting, cooking or other purposes.
- 3.3 Annual Gas Safety Check: under Gas safety regulations all appliances, including customers own appliances, need to be checked in relation to gas soundness, ventilation and flue provisions.

4. Policy Content

4.1 Record keeping

Nehemiah will maintain a comprehensive record of:

- all properties with gas supplies.
- gas appliances which Nehemiah owns within its housing stock.
- details of any newly installed gas appliances which Nehemiah owns within its housing stock, including date of installation.
- accurate records of all servicing work and gas safety checks completed.

All records will be retained for a minimum of two years.

4.2 Access to property

4.2.1. Nehemiah actively promotes the importance of allowing access for the annual gas safety checks to customers through customer newsletters, information leaflets and during the sign-up process. Access will be arranged on an appointment basis and every effort will be made to arrange access with the customer for a mutually convenient appointment. Once work is completed, all customers will be issued with a copy of the gas safety record certificate.

4.2.2. Nehemiah will take all reasonable steps to gain access to a property, including personal visits to explain why access is important. Where a customer fails to respond to requests, or consistently refuses to allow access to their property, Nehemiah will commence legal proceedings to obtain a Court Order to enter the property in order to fulfil its legal obligations as a landlord. Legal action will only be taken as a last resort.

4.2.3. Where access to the property is obtained through the court, Nehemiah will be responsible for securing the property and making good any damage caused by entering the property. The cost of this work will be re-charged to the customer.

4.3 Customers own appliances

Under Gas Safety regulations landlords are obliged to check all appliances, including the customers own. Where the customers own appliance is found to be defective the appliance will be disconnected and labelled as dangerous. The customer will be advised immediately of the defect and advised it is their responsibility to carry out the necessary repair. Where the customer refuses to allow the appliance to be disconnected the gas contractor will immediately inform Nehemiah and the National Grid under Regulation 34 Unsafe Appliances of the 1998 regulations.

Where a customer wishes to install his or her own appliances such as a fire or cooker, the appliance must be fitted by a Gas Safe registered Installer and prior permission must be obtained from Nehemiah.

4.4 Damage to appliances

Where an appliance is found to be unsafe as a result of wilful neglect or deliberate damage the customer will be responsible for repair or replacement of the item damaged. Nehemiah reserves the right to carry out the necessary work and recharge costs to the customer, in line with its rechargeable repairs policy and procedures.

4.5 Void properties

To minimise disruption to new customers, Nehemiah will undertake the annual service and safety check during the void period if the service is due within the next 2 months. If the service is due after the 2-month period then only the turn on and test will be carried out.

4.6 New customers

Nehemiah will ensure that all gas fittings and flues are safe before re-letting a property and a copy of the gas safety certificate will be given to all new customers after the sign-up procedures/welcome pack.

5. **Equality and diversity**

5.1 Nehemiah recognises that it operates in a community within which there is wide social diversity, and is committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity.

5.2 A full detail of our approach is set out in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

6. **Customer involvement**

6.1 Nehemiah recognises the importance of working in partnership with our customers to develop and continuously improve our services and raise standards.

6.2 To demonstrate this commitment, this policy:

- will be reviewed in consultation with the scrutiny panel's review timetable;
- information in relation to performance against the aims and standards set down by this policy will be published by Nehemiah.
- will be developed and reviewed in light of customer feedback, comments and complaints.

7. Policy monitoring and review

7.1 Nehemiah is committed to completing 100% annual safety checks and/or servicing to its properties. The Property Services manager is responsible for the performance of the gas servicing programme and will monitor the gas servicing and safety inspection programme to ensure that all risks are minimised and our legal obligations are met.

7.2 A 10% sample of completed services will be quality checked by an independent Gas Safe registered gas installer to check technical compliance with Gas Safe and installation guidelines.

7.3 The monitoring of outcomes is essential for Nehemiah to track the impact of our approach to gas safety. Monitoring of the implementation of the gas servicing policy and the associated procedures will consider:

- how easily customers can access the gas service.
- the performance against service standards and targets set out in the procedures.
- the cost of our gas servicing and safety programme.
- customer satisfaction and level of complaints, reviews, and appeals.

7.4 Review

Monitoring results will be used by Nehemiah to inform future policy review in this area. All reviews will consider whether:

- the current policy adheres to legislative and regulatory requirements and reflects current good practice.
- the aims and objectives of the policy being met.
- the current policy outcomes meet the needs and aspirations of our diverse customer base.
- service users are aware of and understand the policy and believe it to be consistent and fair.
- the policy provides sufficient choice for customers.
- the service offers value for money.
- partnership and contractor arrangements are working effectively.

Overall monitoring and review of the policy will be undertaken in consultation with:

- Staff groups
- Existing and future service users

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

8. Responsibility

- 8.1 The Operations Director is responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and the associated procedures. This includes responsibility for monitoring and review, staff awareness and training, policy development and communication to customers.

9. Anniversary Date Variation

How long does Nehemiah have to keep records for?

Under regulation 36(3) (c) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Records must be kept for at least two years.

However, if you wish to take advantage of the new flexibility introduced under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 to have gas safety checks carried out up to 2 months before the date the check needs to be carried out but still retain the original deadline date (as if the check had been carried out exactly 12 months after the previous check) you will have to demonstrate that you have complied with the law and carried out the gas safety checks within the required timescales. The record will need to be kept until two further gas safety checks have been carried out.