

Gas and Pipeline Infrastructure Safety

Information Bulletin:

Illegal repairs to damaged live gas infrastructure

26 March 2018

Background

Live gas infrastructure, mainly gas service pipes, are often damaged by third parties installing other utility apparatus.

Unfortunately, such damage to gas infrastructure is not being reported, rather it is illegally repaired by unqualified and untrained personnel using incompatible fittings, incorrect repair materials and techniques.

The usual result of an illegal repair is that after a period of time a gas leak develops at the location. This is both dangerous and undesirable.

ESV requirement

Repairs to damaged gas infrastructure **must**:

- i. **Always** be reported to the gas utility and the area made safe until relevant gas utility personnel arrive on site and take control of the situation. Do not stand down wind of the escaping gas and keep a safe distance away. Remove and extinguish all ignition sources (also identify any overhead hazards that may exist). Assist the emergency response team by directing them to the site of the gas escape via clear unhindered access.
- ii. **Only** be carried out by personnel who are trained and currently competent to carry out the repairs and who are either directly employed or contracted by the gas asset owner concerned.
- iii. **Only** be undertaken using gas pipe, fittings and materials approved by the gas asset owner.
- iv. **Always** be checked for supply security, by pressure/leak testing with an approved leak detector or fluid.

Note: The immediate proximity along the gas pipe in both directions away from the repair site should also be checked using a gas detector before backfilling, in accordance with gas company procedures.

Further clarification

It is an offence to interfere with gas company pipelines and penalties apply.

Gas Safety Act 1997, Part 3, Section 79B states:

“A person must not carry out any excavation or boring or open any ground so as to uncover or expose any pipeline owned or operated by a gas company unless -

- (a) *the person has the authority of that gas company to do so; or*
- (b) *if the notice of the person’s intention to do so is required to be given to that gas company under the regulations, the person gives that notice.”*

There are rigorous requirements that must be met when intending to work in close proximity to licensed pipelines (including transmission gas pipelines).

More information

If you have queries in relation to this Bulletin, contact the Gas and Pipeline Infrastructure Safety team on (03) 9203 9735 or visit www.esv.vic.gov.au.