



Fire and Gas Safety guidance for farmers using LPG for caravans

Some farmers use caravans on their land for seasonal workers or to provide holiday accommodation. This guidance sets out some of the hazards and basic safety rules that should be followed and includes some important legal duties.



For more information on domestic gas safety see the HSE Gas Safety homepage: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/index.htm>

For more information on gas safety on farms see the LPGA website: <http://www.lpga.uk/farms>

Hazards

- About 30 people every year die from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by gas appliances that have not been properly installed or maintained. This happens when gas does not burn properly, for example when there is not enough fresh air in a room and/or the flue gets blocked up.
- Gas leak building up in a confined area until there is a source of ignition leading to a fire or explosion; as LPG is heavier than air, it can collect in drains or ditches even in the open air;
- Gas leak in a caravan caused by a pipework or hose leak;
- Fire in a caravan caused by misuse of a gas appliance, for example too close to combustible or flammable material, or by malfunctioning burners which ignite nearby flammable material;
- Fire from another source such as a grass fire that affects stored gas in bottles or tanks;

Precautions

LPG storage, pipework and appliances

- Only a gas installer who is competent to work with LPG should carry out any work on the gas system; for all work except on tanks and cylinders they must also be CORGI registered. (The gas supplier or their contractor normally carries out work on the bulk tank). All CORGI registered installers carry an ID card with their photograph; on the reverse is a list of their areas of competence. If you have any doubts about an installer you can check them out by telephoning CORGI on 01256 372300.
- You don't need to be CORGI registered to change gas cylinders or to replace a hose connecting a cylinder to the other gas pipework; nor to replace the hose or regulator on a portable gas appliance. But if the work is not done properly there is a risk that there could be a gas leak or other problem so whoever does it must know how to do it safely and follow any manufacturer's instructions.
- You have a legal duty to maintain all the gas pipework and appliances and their flues in a safe condition. This means there should be an ongoing programme of regular inspections together with any necessary repairs and servicing.
- Before you let anyone move into a caravan for the first time you should make sure that you have had the gas appliances checked for safety by a CORGI registered installer with the appropriate LPG competences, unless they are newly installed (in which case there is a year's grace before a check is needed, but you should keep a copy of documentation provided by the installer.) This check should be repeated every 12 months. You should:
 - Keep a copy of the safety check record for two years.
 - Give a copy to the tenant, or if the period of occupation is less than 28 days, put it up in a prominent place in the caravan.
 - Have the record translated or explained to employees who do not read English.
- If LPG is piped to the caravans from a bulk tank, even if you do not own the tank, you will also have legal duties under gas safety legislation as a 'gas supplier' who has to make arrangements for an emergency service in the event of a leak of gas or fumes. If you provide gas from cylinders you share these supplier duties with the cylinder gas supplier. You should come to a contractual agreement with your gas supplier about how this is done.



Information and instruction

- Make sure gas users have general safety information including:
 - The hazards and properties of LPG;
 - The importance of not blocking ventilation;
 - Using an appliance only for its intended purpose (for instance not using a gas cooker for heating).
 - Appliance manufacturers' instructions for users.
- Have clear arrangements for reporting faults and making sure repairs are done.
- Put up a notice detailing emergency action in a prominent position adjacent to the gas meter/emergency control.
- If your workers do not speak English, you should arrange to have essential information translated or explained.

Gas storage area

- Follow the gas supplier's safety instructions for the gas storage area, (both for cylinders or a tank) including:
 - Keep it clear of weeds, grass, rubbish and other combustible materials. (Don't use chlorate-based weed killer as it can be a fire hazard)
 - Don't allow sources of ignition such as bonfires, electrical equipment, barbecues near gas storage areas,
 - Segregate full and empty cylinders,
 - Keep the area secure and protected from accidental damage e.g. by vehicles
- Check with your gas supplier before making any changes that may affect storage or gas delivery e.g. providing screening for the tanks, building sheds or fences.



Fire Precautions

It is essential that you ask for advice from the Fire Prevention Officer (FPO) in your local Fire Service on the following matters:

- The separation distances that should be provided and maintained between individual caravans and from farm buildings;
- The provision of suitable fire fighting equipment, such as permanently fixed hose reels and fire extinguishers. Such equipment needs to be regularly maintained and tested to ensure that it will function effectively when needed.
- The means of giving warning in case of fire. You will need to consider how to deal with the issue of workers whose first language is not English to make sure they understand any instructions relating to the use of fire alarms and evacuation procedures.

Where there are cooking facilities in use in the caravans you should provide a suitable fire blanket

Smoke and Carbon monoxide detectors

As an additional safety measure you are recommended to fit smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the caravans; detectors should conform to the relevant British Standard and be sited in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.



Additional guidance

General fire precautions:	'Fire Safety: an employer's guide', ISBN 0 11 341229 0. (obtainable through the Stationary Office http://www.tso.co.uk)
Bulk LPG storage in tanks:	LPGA Code of Practice 1 HSE Chemical Information Sheet 4 'Use of LPG in small tanks'.
Storage in cylinders:	LPGA Code of Practice 7 HSE Chemical Information Sheet 5 'Small scale use of LPG cylinders'.

HSE publications are obtainable through HSE Books, (Tel 01787 881165, <http://www.hsebooks.co.uk>) or via HSE's web site, <http://www.hse.gov.uk>.

LP Gas Association

Pavilion 16, Headlands Business Park, Salisbury Road, Ringwood, Hampshire, BH24 3PB.
<http://www.lpga.co.uk>



IS19 05/2004

