

Media Release

Surge in Illegal Gas Work Prosecutions During 2015

CER Warns Public against Using Unregistered Gas Installers

Friday, 05 February 2016: The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER), Ireland's independent energy regulator, has reported a significant jump in the number of successful prosecutions against unregistered and illegally operating gas installers during 2015.

The CER prosecutes individuals or companies for illegally undertaking gas works while not registered or falsely portraying themselves as registered when they are not. It is illegal to carry out work on gas within a home unless registered with Registered Gas Installers of Ireland (RGII), which oversee the work of Registered Gas Installers (RGI's) with respect to safety on behalf of the CER.

In total, the CER received 53 reports of potential illegal domestic gas works taking place in Irish homes in 2015. Every report was fully investigated by the CER to determine if there was illegal activity and what cases could be pursued through the courts. The CER initiated criminal proceedings against these reports and secured 15 prosecutions against individuals or companies.

The CER's Commissioner for Energy Safety, Dr. Paul McGowan, said:

"The number of prosecutions obtained against individuals and companies saw a substantial increase in 2015. The details of some of the work carried out by illegally operating gas installers, and in most cases totally unqualified individuals, were truly astounding and highlighted the real dangers that exist for members of the public who engage unregistered gas installers to do work in their homes".

There are over 3,000 Registered Gas Installers in Ireland. By using an RGI, consumers can have confidence that they are dealing with a competent installer who has the required expertise in gas safety to ensure their gas installation is safe. The work carried out by an RGI is also insured and is inspected by RGII on an annual basis. Under legislation, individuals who are successfully prosecuted can face a fine of up to €5,000 or €15,000, with the potential of additional imprisonment of up to six months or three years.

The successful prosecutions emphasise the requirement by law for all gas installers to be registered with RGII before carrying out any gas works relating to domestic gas appliances, for example in homes, or else face prosecution.

The CER's objective in this area is to protect life and property, deliver the safety regulatory system to oversee the industry, build awareness levels of the issues among consumers and the general public and to prosecute unregistered individuals or companies where required. CER investigates all reports

of alleged breaches of legislation. Illegal activity can be reported anonymously to CER or to RGII (www.RGII.ie or calling 1850 454 454)

Dr. Paul McGowan sent out a strong warning to members of the public to ensure that they use a registered professional and to report any suspected illegal activity or dangerous gas works and said:

“If done correctly, gas works can ensure a safe and efficient use of energy in homes throughout Ireland. If done incorrectly, they can be a real threat to an individual’s life and that of their family. The CER will continue to vigorously pursue investigations against unregistered companies and individuals to protect the general public. If a gas installer does not have the required registration or cannot prove membership of the RGII scheme, consumers should not use them and if they suspect that they are acting illegally, they should report them immediately to RGII or the CER”.

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Note to Editors:

1. Under the Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006 the CER has responsibility to regulate the activities of gas undertakings and gas installers with respect to safety. The CER appointed the Register of Gas Installers Ireland (RGII) to carry out this function on its behalf. Any person wishing to carry out Gas Works (as defined under Statutory Instrument 225/2009 and 299/2011) is required by law to register as a Registered Gas Installer (RGI) with RGII
2. Please visit CER website at www.cer.ie for further information on CER’s safety responsibilities