Oil and Solid Fuel Servicing Policy

Housing Department
Brentwood Borough Council

Version Control

Version	Date of change	Officer	Title
V1	18/08/2022	Johanna Batchelor-Lamey & D.Wellings	Compliance Manager and Corporate H&S Advisor

Approved at the relevant Committee on:

Contents

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Policy is to inform and guide staff, contractors, and tenants of the steps to be taken by Brentwood Borough Council to fulfil its statutory obligation to ensure that all Council owned oil and solid fuel appliances are safe and in good working order.

2. Aims and Objectives

- Brentwood Borough Council is committed to ensuring that it carries out its duties in respect of Oil and Solid Fuel to protect its tenants, visitors to its properties and its physical assets.
- Repair and maintain pipework, flues, and appliances in a safe condition.
- Ensure an appliance safety check is undertaken on each appliance and flue within the timeframes contained within The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- Supply a copy of the certificate to existing tenants within 28 days of the check being carried out and before occupation to new tenants.
- Ensure Gas Safe registration is maintained and its engineers and that engineers are suitably qualified when undertaking work on oil and solid fuel appliances, fittings, and flues.

3. Introducing Oil

Apart from Gas there are other sources of heating the Council supplies to properties that are not on the mains gas network. These are: liquid fuel heating such as oil and solid fuel such as wood.

3.1 Oil

Heating oil is normally used in a 'wet' heating system, where an oil-fired boiler heats water, then provides central heating via radiators and hot water to the taps in your home.

4. Introducing Solid Fuel

Solid fuels such as coal and wood can be an alternative to gas or oil for heating the home. Renewable fuels such as wood are a resourceful alternative to fossil fuels.

Solid fuel (mostly coal) used to be the most popular form of heating for homes in the UK, but from the 1960s natural gas central heating grew in popularity and is now used by many commercial and domestic users.

Burning solid fuels can pollute the air and many cities used to suffer heavy, sooty smogs. In response to these problems the Government passed the first Clean Air Act in 1956, which regulated the use of household solid fuels. Many urban local authorities established Smoke Control Areas under the Clean Air Act 1968: these are areas where special provisions apply if people wish to burn solid fuels.

When living in a Smoke Control Area there are restrictions in the fuels that can be burnt, for example it is not legally permitted to burn high sulphur coals or any form of wood in open fireplace.

Stoves and boilers burn solid fuels far more efficiently than open fires. Stoves can provide heat for a single room, while boilers can heat several radiators and an entire home. If you live in a Smoke Control Area an 'exempt appliance' allows legal burn of dry fuels such as wood logs and pellets.

Where the home heating choice is for solid fuels, it must be ensured that both your appliance and chimney are regularly maintained to keep the household safe. It is also important to make sure it is within the law when a stove or solid fuel appliance is fitted and comply with any conditions of the Clean Air Act that apply.

The Air Quality (Domestic Solid Fuels Standards) (England) Regulations 2020 have recently come into effect from May 2021 and requires solid fuel to be certified before purchase. For further information please visit https://www.hetas.co.uk/ready-to-burn-a-look-at-the-regulations-in-more-detail/

4.1 Fuels

There are many fuels available for solid fuel appliances. If you intend to burn wood logs it is important that you obtain well-seasoned logs, the drier the log, the more efficient the appliance will be as heat will not be lost burning off moisture. High moisture fuel can also form a creosote like substance within the flue or chimney system, which should be avoided. It's very important to choose a fuel that both suits your needs and is suitable for the appliance.

In May 2021, new legislation in England was introduced to restrict the sale of wood, manufactured solid fuels and bituminous coal intended to be burned at domestic premises (including houseboats). These must now come with the 'Ready to Burn' logo and a certificate issued by an approved manufactured solid fuel certification body. More information is available on their website (https://www.readytoburn.org/) .

You should also check to see if your property is sited within a smoke control area, which will restrict your choice of fuel. More advice on smoke control areas can be obtained from your local authority.

4.2 Storing Fuels

Storing your fuel in a secure, dry, and well-ventilated location is important to maximise its lifespan and to stop leaves and other rubbish mixing with it. If you intend to burn seasoned wood logs you should consider a purpose-built log store, which will keep rain off, whilst providing maximum ventilation.

The size and location of your fuel store should be considered and calculated based upon minimum delivery volumes and the amount of fuel to be burned over a given time. The location of your fuel storage needs to be considered and not positioned near combustible sources e.g. electrical or other flammable sources.

5. Responsibility Structure

The Council has a hierarchy of officers responsible for the Gas Safety, Oil and Solid Fuel in its properties. The table below lists those responsible and their respective positions:

Brentwood Borough Council – Duty Holder
Chief Executive – Delegated Duty Holder
Director of Housing – Senior Duty Holder
Estate Management Team Leader – Operating Duty Holder
Contracts Manager / Compliance Manager – Delivery Duty Holders
Housing Officers
Contractor Responsibilities
Gas Auditor Responsibilities
Tenant Responsibilities

5.1 Duty Holder

Brentwood Borough Council is a ‘Duty Holder’ as defined within Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

5.2. Delegated Duty Holder

The Chief Executive is a Delegated Duty Holder and responsible for:

- effective operation of Gas Safety Management for all council housing stock,
- adequate resources are made available to ensure a structure which fully meet gas safety responsibilities,
- allow responsibilities for gas safety to be delegated appropriately throughout the management structure.

5.3. Senior Duty Holder

The Director of Housing is a Senior Duty Holder and responsible for:

- ensuring arrangements are in place to implement this policy,
- ensuring the policy is continually reviewed for its adequacy.
- provisions of adequate financial and human resources to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that gas systems are installed and maintained in compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (GSIUR) 1998, Approved Code of Practice and Guidance, the Health and safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

5.4. Operating Duty Holder

The Estate Management Team Leader is an Operating Duty Holder and responsible for the following:

- aware of the importance of their role in the gas safety process
- aware of where the gas safety management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process
- follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.
- appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per the procedures
- to report/escalate any issues in connection with the gas safety, oil, or solid fuel process to their line manager as soon as possible and other competent managers as required
- report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to oil or solid fuel safety to the Housing Compliance Manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor.

5.5. Delivery Duty Holder – Contracts Manager

The Contracts Manager is a Delivery Duty Holder and responsible for:

- adequate resources made available in each area to manage gas, oil, or solid fuel safety
- demonstrating commitment to continuous safety improvement,
- identifying specific responsibilities to the Compliance Manager and their team,
- report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to gas, oil, or solid fuel safety to the Housing Compliance Manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor.
- contractual arrangements made with contractors to carry out gas installations servicing, safety inspections and repairs comply with current legislation and good practice; and
- ensuring all records are maintained on Keystone database
- compliance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (GSIUR)1998 in all work that has an impact on gas oil, or solid fuel, safety maintenance contracts.

5.6. Delivery Duty Holder – Compliance Manager

The Compliance Manager is a Delivery Duty Holder and responsible for:

- aware of the importance of their role in the gas, oil, or solid fuel safety process
- aware of where the gas safety management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process.
- follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.
- appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per the procedures.
- to report/escalate any issues in connection with the gas safety process to their line manager as soon as is possible and other competent managers as required.
- Gas Safety Policy is kept up to date as per legislative or good practice changes.
- all changes are communicated to all staff involved in the gas, oil, or solid fuel process, providing information, or training where necessary.
- report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to gas, oil, or solid fuel safety to the line manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor
- each property is maintained and has an oil and solid fuel boiler service carried out every 12 months, as far as reasonably practicable.
- a competent and appropriately qualified independent gas auditor carries out quality monitoring work of contractors who implement the gas, oil, or solid fuel servicing, safety and repairs and provides a report to the Housing Compliance Manager.
- any new gas, oil, or solid fuel installations comply with all current legislation and mandatory guidance.

5.7. Housing Officers

The Housing Officers are responsible for:

- aware of the importance of their role in the oil and solid fuel process.
- aware of where the gas, oil and solid fuel management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process.
- follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.
- appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per the procedures.
- report decisions/all dangerous and potentially dangerous incidents relating to gas safety to the Housing Compliance Manager and Corporate Health & Safety Advisor.

5.8. Contractor

The Oil and Solid Fuel Contractor is responsible for:

- aware of the importance of their role in the oil, and solid fuel safety process
- aware of where the Gas, Oil and Solid Fuel management procedures are stored on Teams and what their part is in the process.

- follow the procedures and processes to try to identify any problematic access/safety issues as soon as possible.
- appropriately and accurately record what action they have taken at each step of the process as per procedures.
- report/escalate any issues in connection with the oil and solid fuel safety process to their line manager as soon as is possible.
- ensuring all Oil and Solid Fuel Engineers are competent and registered with Gas Safe Register and quality monitoring and training reviews are undertaken by the contractor.

5.9. Gas Auditor

The Independent Utility Compliance Auditor is responsible for:

- competent and appropriately qualified independent external auditor carries out a quality monitoring work of contractors, who implement the gas, oil and solid fuel servicing, safety, and repairs, and provides a report for the Housing Compliance Manager.
- undertake 10% audit of total stock monthly and report their findings to the Housing Compliance Manager to identify any trends or areas of concern.

5.10. Tenant

The Tenant is responsible for:

- facilitate access to the property on the due date, to enable the oil or solid fuel servicing of Council owned appliances to be completed.
- ensure the correct home contents insurance is purchased, informing the insurance company that the property heating supply is an oil or solid fuel appliance.
- notify concerns regarding the safety or functioning of the Council owned oil or solid fuel appliance to the Council's contact centre on 01277 312500.

6. Legal Requirements

The Council employs a contractor who is registered under the Gas Safe Register, to carry out the appropriate checks (service, maintenance, and installations) to ensure oil and solid fuel safety.

Gas Safe Register is the official gas registration body of gas businesses and engineers in the United Kingdom. By law, all gas businesses must be on the Gas Safe Register.

An oil and solid fuel engineer can only be aligned to a registered business and be issued with a licence to undertake gas work on behalf of a registered business if they hold a valid and current qualification. This evidence of competence relates only to matters of gas/oil and solid fuel safety and is

obtained by every engineer through a recognised route of training and assessment.

The Council also engages a fully qualified utility compliance auditor to ensure the oil and sold fuel servicing contractor is meeting its contractual obligations and oil and solid fuel systems are safe.

The Council has several legal obligations it must adhere to and although not exhaustive the Council will comply with all relevant legislation and associated regulations, including:

- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Building Regulations 2010 - Part J (Combustion Appliance and Fuel Storage Systems) and Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power)
- TI/133D domestic oil storage tank spillage and fire risk assessment
- The Air Quality (Domestic Solid Fuels Standards) (England) Regulations 2020
- The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013

Legislation and Regulations describe specific responsibilities in terms of gas, supply, installation, servicing, and gas safety.

6.1 Tenant's legal requirements:

6.1.2 Domestic Oil Spills

Over the past few years there have been several serious domestic oil pollution incidents.

Incidents of oil pollution can, by their nature, cause serious environmental damage, through the pollution of rivers and groundwater, threatening drinking water supplies, fish, and other aquatic life, not to mention potentially harming health and property. The investigation and clean-up costs can be more than £20,000.

The majority of residents who have domestic oil tanks assume that their home insurance policy would cover the clean-up costs following a spill. However, this is not always the case. The Council recommends that households check with their insurance companies, to ensure that both the immediate aftermath of an oil leak and the costs of any subsequent site investigations and clean-up are covered.

To help reduce the risk of oil leaks and spills the tenant/householder are advised to:

- regularly check your oil tank, boiler and pipes for leaks or corrosion
- if you notice a sudden increase in the amount of oil you are using, check for leaks. Even a minor leak can add up to a large loss of fuel over time.
- carefully check your current fuel stock before re-ordering and if possible, supervise deliveries
- ensure your boiler is regularly serviced by an Oil Firing Technical Association (OFTEC) registered engineer.

6.1.3 Identifying an oil leak

There are several warning signs that you may have an oil leak.

These include:

- a strong smell of solvent, petrol, or oil inside or outside your home or in your cupboards
- black stains and dead plants or grass around your tank
- a sudden increase in the amount of fuel you use.

6.1.4 If you suspect an oil leak, you should follow these steps:

- if you do have an oil leak or spill at home, try to stop it at the source and use absorbing material such as sand to contain the oil and prevent it from entering drains and waterways.
- try to find out where the leak is coming from switch off your oil supply at the tank and arrange to have it emptied (if needed)
- arrange for an engineer to repair or replace your tank or pipework.
- if the leak could affect a stream, pond or other water supply call the Council immediately on 01277 312500.
- never use detergents or a hose to wash the spill away.
- prevent the spill from entering drains by blocking its flow using earth, sand or commercial products that absorb oil.
- keep your home well-ventilated by opening windows and doors.
- call your household insurance company or landlord and make them aware of the leak.
- if there is a strong smell of oil in your home, call the Council immediately.
- do not put off acting or assume the problem will go away.

You are strongly urged to contact your council, who will offer advice on the steps necessary to address the issue. Failure to properly address a significant oil spill could lead to one or more of the following:

- major liabilities to compensate other adjacent landowners.
- significant loss of value of your property
- determination of the land as "contaminated land" under the Environmental Protection Act 1990

6.2 Installers/maintenance legal requirements

Must be competent, have completed an industry recognised training course and is registered with Gas Safe. They have a duty to ensure that nothing about an

appliance or its installation (and associated fittings and flues and source of ventilation) can cause danger whilst the appliance is in use.

6.3 Landlord's legal requirements

Have a duty to ensure that gas appliances and flues provided for tenants' use in residential property are installed and maintained in a safe condition. They are required to perform an annual safety check which must be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered engineer on each appliance or flue.
Site new fuel tanks away from property boundaries, building openings, drains, streams, and ponds. For further advice regarding tank locations contact the Building Control team at the council.

All non-domestic oil storage tanks over 200 litres need to be bunded.
For domestic premises you need to carry out an oil storage risk assessment (this can be obtained from OFTEC - form TI/133D). In brief a Bund is required in domestic situations if...

- You are storing over 2500 litres.
- Your tank is near an open drain or loose fitting manhole.
- Your tank is within 10m of controlled water such as a river, stream etc.
- Your tank is located where any spillage could travel over hard ground to reach controlled water.
- Your tank is located within 50m of a borehole, spring or well.
- Your tank vent is not visible from the fill point. (Such as an extended fill point)
- Your oil use is for a building other than a single family dwelling.
- Any other unique hazards to your site.
- Please refer to https://www.oftec.org

7. Solid Fuel Servicing Schedule

The following works will be undertaken by the Council's contractor.
All work to be carried out in accordance with BS EN 15287-1:2007+A1:2010 (Chimneys. Design, installation, and commissioning of chimneys. Chimneys for non-room sealed heating appliances) and HETAS, or relevant European Standard. Resident to be instructed on how to operate the appliance.

All properties will have a carbon monoxide detector (performing to British standard BS EN 50291) fitted in the same room as any heating appliance (such as a boiler or stove), which is inside a building (including non-habitable areas) and is not designed solely for cooking purposes. (Properties may have more than one smoke detector fitted in other rooms, but this is for smoke and not carbon monoxide. These are not part of the solid fuel servicing schedule. These are part of the 5 yearly EICR inspection.)

High risk appliances (wood burning fire/stove or oiled fuelled external boiler) shall be checked every 6 months.

Sweep chimneys for all appliances with BS wire centred brush of appropriate size and strength for the chimney and fuel burnt. Brushes to be in a good state of repair with full bristle. This will be undertaken by the Council's contractor.

Include for all equipment, seals, lubricants and making necessary adjustments to appliance(s) to ensure safe and correct operation. All system checks including expansion tank, pipework, radiators, valves, and controls should be carried out as per the main specification within this document.

Where appropriate carry out the following:

Open Fire
- Check operation and clean damper assembly on top of appliance
- Scrape and clean firebox
- Check if ashpit cover is airtight
- Confirm operation of any air control and any recommendations
- Check fire front is secured to hearth
- Check seal between fire front and fireplace opening and hearth
- Confirm adequate ventilation
- Carry out Smoke Draw Test on completion.

Room Heater
- Check operation and clean damper assembly on top of appliance
- Check flue connection is secure and sealed correctly
- Scrape and clean firebox
- Check operation of damper mechanism
- Check and clean internal flueways
- Check seals between the appliance & hearth / fire surround
- Check ashpit cover for airtight seal – repair as necessary
- Check operation of any air control and that all seals are intact to ensure only air via the air control enters the firebox
- Check convection chamber to flue seals are intact, replace as necessary
- Check all parts in contact with the fire bars, fire bricks, damper mechanism and de-ashing mechanism
- Check, using feeler gauge fire door & ash pit seals with metal to metal contact against manufacturer's instructions
- Fire doors and ash pit cover door with rope seals to be checked by rubbing coloured chalk on the knife-edge and observing contact
- Check fire door alignment. Report all findings and correct as necessary
- Check any fan for correct operation and wear
- Check for adequate ventilation and make any recommendations to the Client if required
- Carry out Smoke Draw Test on completion.

Independent Boiler
- Check for debris at the base of the chimney flue
- Check and clean all internal flueways

- Check operation of flue draft stabiliser and lubricate with appropriate high temperature grease
- Clean and scrape firebox
- On gravity feed boiler scrape and clean hopper, paint with suitable anti- rust treatment
- Check movable grate or de-clinkering mechanism for correct operation
- Check access doors for airtight fit
- Check any secondary air ducts are clean and free from debris
- Check fuel regulator plates (if fitted) for correct installation and suitable for the fuel being used. Confirm plates are not bowed
- Check operation and calibration of thermostat
- Check operation and condition of fan and air regulator (if fitted), check for wear
- Confirm adequate ventilation and make any recommendations to the Client if required
- Carry out Smoke Draw Test on completion.

8. Links to other Policies and Procedures

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- Brentwood Borough Council Gas Safety and Servicing Policy

9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless legislative or organisational changes occur.