



## AGA NewsFlash

Please forward to others within your organisation.

# AGA NewsFlash

## AGA Laboratory Open Day

AGA will be hosting an open day at its world class testing facilities in Braeside, Victoria on **Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016 starting from 2:30pm**. This will give AGA members and other interested parties the opportunity to mingle, ask questions to AGA experts and to also have a look at AGA's world class Performance Testing Laboratory.



This is a free event and a light BBQ lunch will be provided.

**Registrations are essential** - If you wish to attend please email [office@aga.asn.au](mailto:office@aga.asn.au)

## Butane Gas Cartridges - Australian Delegation visits Korea

Portable gas appliances with disposable butane gas cartridges have become increasingly popular in Australia in recent years and include cartridge cookers and portable outdoor space heaters, amongst other appliance types. Unfortunately, there have been a significant number of accidents involving these appliances which have resulted in serious injuries. Accordingly, AGA initiated an extensive investigation to identify the safety issues associated with these appliance types and the disposable gas cartridges that fuelled them and, subsequently, convened the AGA Industry Forum held in December 2014 to report the findings. The Forum was attended by manufacturers, importers, retailers and regulatory authorities, along with key representatives from the Australian & New Zealand Burns Association and the Korea Gas Safety Corporation.

The objective of the Industry Forum was to alert all stakeholders to potential safety issues associated with these products and encourage them to work together to find ways to improve safety outcomes.

Much work has been done since the Industry Forum and, as a consequence, significant improvements are being made to Australian Standard, **AS 2658-2008 : "LP Gas - Portable and mobile appliances"**, however, this process takes time. Moreover, regulatory authorities in Australia and New Zealand have taken a keen interest in these issues and will be introducing new requirements that will eventually be incorporated in Australian Standards. As far as the appliances are concerned, the steps needed to improve safety are well underway and, as an interim step, the Gas Technical Regulator's Committee (GTRC) plan to issue a "*Technical Guidance Bulletin*" encapsulating a range of improved safety measures which, ultimately, may be incorporated in Australian Standard AS2658.

This is a major step forward, however, AGA believes that this is the first of two important steps towards a comprehensive solution if the safety issues are to be fully addressed.

Part of the solution lies in safety improvements in appliance design and quality assurance, and we are delighted to report that this is now being addressed. That said, our work is unfinished. AGA believes that the second part of the solution lies in making the gas cartridge inherently safe under normal operation as well as under



operating conditions that can best be described as "foreseeable misuse" i.e. the use of oversized cooking vessels such as barbecue plates. It is estimated that over 20,000,000 butane gas cartridges are sold in Australia each year and, to date, the vast majority have been sourced from modern hi-tech manufacturing facilities in Korea which are subject to stringent quality assurance protocols that are overseen by the Korea Gas Safety Corporation.

To date, most Australian import businesses have sourced gas cartridges from Korea, however, it is time that Australia introduced its own safety requirements to protect consumers from importation of poor quality gas cartridges that are readily available on the international market. AGA recognised that this situation represents a serious potential risk to Australian consumers and, therefore, has developed a comprehensive Certification Scheme for disposable butane gas cartridges. The AGA Scheme provides safety assurance of gas cartridges and ongoing production quality surveillance, as well as identifying the gas composition. This will provide confidence that the market for high quality, safe gas cartridges will not be undermined by the importation of poor quality imports. More importantly, it will provide safety assurance for Australian consumers. AGA's Certification Scheme is a first in Australia!

Recently, AGA Chief Executive, Mr Chris Wealthy and Mr Jason Treseder from Energy Safe Victoria travelled to Korea to meet senior officials from the Korea Gas Safety Corporation and visit some of the hi-tech gas cartridge manufacturing facilities. The visit showed the quality of gas cartridge manufacturing in Korea and highlighted the need to introduce measures to protect Australian consumers from the importation of poor quality and potentially unsafe products. Currently, there are no specific safety regulations for gas cartridges in Australia and, therefore, safety critical parameters such as pressure rating, cartridge design and construction, dimensions, gas composition and over-pressure protection systems are unregulated. AGA welcomes the support received from the various state and territory regulatory authorities in developing the Certification Scheme for disposable butane gas cartridges, and looks forward to working with them to further enhance consumer safety.



## AGA Meets with the Victorian Building Authority (VBA)

The VBA has been working with the caravan Industry to resolve the long standing difficulties associated with plumber's carrying out plumbing work that is not in strict conformity with the Plumbing Code of Australia (PCA).

Under the Plumbing Regulations 2008, water supply work is "any heated water service in or on a caravan" and the PCA calls up WaterMark requirements for water heaters and associated fixtures and fittings.

To help address this issue, the VBA issued a modification declaration temporarily exempting plumbers from having to comply with WaterMark product certification requirements when working on heated water services in caravans. This modification is time-limited and will cease to have effect on 31 January 2017. After this date all relevant products and materials used in plumbing work on caravan heated water services must fully comply with the WaterMark product certification requirements.



Regarding cold water services for caravans that utilise an integral water tank only, the cold water service plumbing requirements are exempt from regulations as the regulations defines water supply work being "connected to a drinking water supply".

VBA advised the 2008 Regulations are subject to review every 10 years and the review process is due to start shortly. This review will include Industry consultation and is likely to consider all plumbing related products associated with caravans.

For further information or assistance, please contact AGA's Manager Certifications, Mr Ivan Marsic.



## SAI-Global's Certification Services Sale

Press reports indicate that SAI-Global has commenced formal sale proceedings of its Assurance Services business which covers a range of inspection and certification services. Reports suggest that the sale will include certification services for gas products, plumbing and drainage (WaterMark) products as well as electrical products which are subject to point-of-sale regulations and, in most cases, require third party certification to verify product compliance with applicable safety standards. If you have products certified by SAI-Global and are concerned about the potential implications of the proposed sale of SAI-Global's Assurance Services, we recommend that you contact SAI-Global to gauge the likely implications for your company and, in particular, ongoing compliance of your products with regulatory requirements.

## Latest Standards Updates

As mentioned in our June 2016 edition NewsFlash, the following gas component Standards are currently out for public comment until 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016:

- AS 4617 - Manual shut off gas valves
- AS 4618 - Gas appliance thermostats
- AS 4619 - Gas appliance thermostats
- AS 4620 - Thermoelectric flame safe guards
- AS 4621 - Regulator for use with liquefied petroleum – vapour phase
- AS 4624 - Combination controls for gas
- AS 4628 - Pressure and temperature limit devices for use with gas burners
- AS 4629 - Automatic shut off and vent valves
- AS 4631 - Limited flexibility connectors for gas
- AS 4632 - Over-pressure and under-pressure cut off device



If you would like to submit any comments, you may forward them to our Group Manager, Technical Operations, Mr Billy (Vasilios) Tabourlos [btaborlos@aga.asn.au], or directly through the Standards Australia website: <https://sapc.standards.org.au/sapc/public/listOpenCommentingPublication.action>

DR AS/NZS 5263.0 (Gas Appliances – General Requirements) will also be released for public comment shortly following a number of necessary updates introduced. AGA will keep you informed of the public comment dates in future NewsFlash articles.

AGA Customers please note: The AGA NewsFlash will be an important way that we communicate with you about issues that affect your certifications. This would include changes relating to our services as well as changes in respect of the regulatory framework within which we operate. Please do not unsubscribe to this email service unless you are confident that you have other ways of keeping informed.