

## **ARHM GOOD PRACTICE NOTE**

### **PRESSURE SYSTEMS AND TRANSPORTABLE GAS CONTAINERS**

#### **Legislation**

Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

Pressure Systems and Transportable Gas Containers Regulations 1989 Approved Code of Practice

#### **Guidance Note**

The legislation aims to ensure the safety of pressure systems and transportable containers throughout industry. It is generally aimed at larger installations, but may overlap into the retirement homes industry where qualifying equipment is installed.

The legislation is lengthy and complicated. In places, particularly in the 'qualifying equipment', it becomes very technical. This note should only be treated as a basic guide.

The aim is to prevent accident and injury caused by or during the use of the equipment, and it centres around the need for regular inspection by competent persons. This aspect is dealt with at the end of this note.

#### **What Is A Pressurised System?**

This is a system comprising one or more pressure vessels of rigid construction and any associated pipework and protective devices or the pipeline serving it.

In order to fall within the guidelines of the legislation, the system must fall into one of three categories: -

Minor – pressure less than 20 bar, temperature between minus 20 and 250 degrees centigrade containing steam, pressurised hot water, compressed air, inert gas or fluorocarbon refrigerant.

Intermediate – any system between minor and major.

Major – large systems requiring high levels of expertise in operation.

The level of expertise required to look after these systems varies depending on a number of factors.

- the size of the equipment
- the age of the equipment
- the use it gets
- the working environment and surroundings

#### **The Requirements**

Initially the system must be adequately designed, constructed and marked by the installer. Safe operating limits must be set and applied throughout the life of the system.

Once running, the requirements are dependent on the factors mentioned above. Minor systems need to have a competent person, incorporated to engineer level and with a knowledge of the legislation and codes of practice available, while larger systems need chartered engineers on site at all times.

Most importantly, a system of written examination is required which will detail any faults with protective devices, vessels and those pipework areas that may be subject to danger. Reports must be acted upon and a record should be maintained at the equipment itself.

### **Conclusion**

It is unlikely that any equipment in a retirement scheme will come within a high-risk category or a major installation. The legislation is such that technical expertise would be required, both to cover the law and for peace of mind for all parties. It is strongly suggested that any pressurised system is brought to the attention of insurers for that reason. Competent engineers will advise on the requirements and ensure all necessary action is taken.

Provided all reasonable actions are taken the legislation will not cause difficulty, but 'do it yourself' action is not recommended.

### **Transportable Gas Containers**

These are containers designed to be transportable for the purpose of refilling and with a volume of at least 0.5 litres and not more than 3,000 litres or a non-refillable container with an internal volume of at least 1.4 litres and no more than 5 litres.

The container must not be used unless it has the approval of the Health & Safety executive or is EEC verified. Before refilling it must be confirmed the container is valid.

A competent person must examine containers periodically and they must not be modified outside the scope of the legislation.

In practice, the owners of such containers will undertake the checking required but care should be taken to ensure the regulations are complied with at all times.

### **DISCLAIMER:**

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