

Always Use the Appliance Manufacturer's Specified Spare Part when Replacing Gas Controls

– An Open Letter from the Society of British Gas Industries –

Manufacturers of gas controls often make variants of a design. Each variant has its own unique 'performance' and consequently a different part number, yet the external appearance and dimensions are often identical. The difference is in their performance specification.

A satisfactory 'performance specification' cannot be assumed between visually similar controls. The appliance safety and/or performance may be significantly affected when a control is replaced with a variant that has not been certified by an independent Test House as suitable for use on the appliance.

For gas-fired boilers the 'specifications' of the components in the control 'chain' are linked and interdependent. In specifying the control variant, the appliance manufacturer has had to ensure that the control 'chain' will continue to deliver safety and performance at specified extremes of the gas, electric and water supply conditions and shut down safely beyond these extremes.

It has been brought to our notice that sometimes a variant, which has not been tried and tested to the appliance manufacturer's specification, is being used as a replacement as it 'appears to work OK'. The Society urges engineers not to follow this practice as the safety and performance of the appliance cannot be assured if the appliance manufacturer's recommended part is not used at all times. The Society is confident that responsible engineers will acknowledge that the decision to fit a part should be made on safety and specification rather than solely on grounds of cost and convenience.

The Society would also highlight Regulation 26 (7) from the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. *No person shall carry out any work in relation to a gas appliance which bears an indication that it conforms to a type approved by any person as complying with safety standards in such a manner that the appliance ceases to comply with those standards.* We would submit that the practice described above contravenes this regulation and consequently the law.

Customers depend on the industry to deliver safety; we must not let them down. Thank you for your support.

The Society is pleased to record that CORGI and the *Benchmark* Initiative have expressed their support for this message.

