

Unregistered gas installer fined after failing to answer questions from HSE inspector

A plumber who was suspected of having undertaken dangerous gas work while unqualified to do so, was fined for failing to answer questions put to him by a Health and Safety Executive inspector.

In February 2020 Luke Rodgers was alleged to have carried out unlawful gas work to replace a boiler at a house in Tingley, Wakefield. The new boiler was left in such a dangerous condition that a Gas Safe registered engineer who attended the house had to make it safe by disconnecting it from the gas supply.

During a HSE interview under caution, Mr Rodgers claimed to have only been hired to do the installation work up to the point where it would then be connected to the gas supply. He claimed that he had arranged for a friend who was qualified to complete all the gas work. Mr Rodgers also stated that another friend had assisted him with general labouring at the property.

During the interview, Mr Rodgers was unwilling to provide the identity of either people which is an offence as it prevented the inspector from following reasonable lines of enquiry as part of the investigation.

At Huddersfield Magistrates' Court Luke Rodgers of Chapel Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 33(1)(e) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He was fined £583 and ordered to pay £1,500 in costs at a hearing on August 8, 2022.

After the hearing, HSE inspector David Beaton said: "The defendant blatantly failed to comply with a requirement under the Health and Safety at Work (etc) Act 1974. This prosecution would not have happened had the defendant provided the information.

"Hopefully, this will send a warning to others that failing to comply with Her Majesty's Inspectors while they exercise their lawful powers will not be condoned by the HSE."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. www.hse.gov.uk^[1]

2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at:
www.legislation.gov.uk/ ^[2]
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk> ¹
4. Please see the link below to the page on HSE's website that is the best guide to doing it the right way:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/power.htm>