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Important Safety Notice

Room-sealed (natural/fanned draught) and open-flued (fanned draught) appliance flues terminating within covered passageways (ginnells)

THIS TECHNICAL BULLETIN SUPERSEDES TB 145

Introduction

Following a recent carbon monoxide (CO) incident, the possible dangers from gas appliance flues that terminate within the confines of a covered passageway (ginnell) between properties has again been highlighted. A covered passageway can be considered as a narrow covered alleyway between two or more properties with a ceiling and/or rooms above that is normally used for access purposes.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has expressed a concern about this type of installation and therefore it was decided that a safety notice be issued to clarify the situation.

Following consultation with some parts of the gas industry, it was agreed that the following guidance should be applied.

Location of flue terminals

British Standard (BS) 5440-1: 2000 - *Installation and maintenance of flues and ventilation for gas appliances of rated input not exceeding 70kW net (1st, 2nd and 3rd family gases) – Part 1: Specification for the installation and maintenance of flues* – states: "terminals shall not be sited in covered passageways between buildings".

Therefore it is not acceptable to position a new flue terminal within the confines of a covered passageway. If an existing appliance is to be replaced, and the flue currently terminates within a covered passageway, an alternative location for the termination will need to be sought. This may lead to the appliance having to be relocated.

When a CORGI registered gas operative encounters an existing gas appliance flue terminal within a covered passageway, the gas operative will need to carry out a risk assessment of the installation in accordance with the procedure outlined in Figure 1 *Appliance Terminals in Covered Passageways - Unsafe Situations Decision Process,* which will enable them to classify the installation.

In older pre-war housing stock, many covered passageways were used as makeshift air raid shelters during the Second World War and often have corrugated iron sheeting fixed to the ceiling. The integrity of the ceiling above the sheeting is often unknown and may need to be considered when determining if there are possible entry points into the property.

Note: Figure 1 is for guidance only as it is difficult to cover every eventuality. It is therefore ultimately for the gas operative on site to make a considered opinion based on a risk assessment of the installation. If the gas operative needs further advice or guidance, they should contact either their immediate manager (where appropriate), their local CORGI Inspector on 0870 401 2300 or the CORGI Gas Safety Helpline on 0870 401 2400.

Guidance on how to resolve the issue

Where practicable, the best solution would be to relocate the appliance to a suitable alternative position, however it is accepted that this will not always be possible.

Therefore, depending on the situation, it may be possible to remove certain risks to allow the gas operative on site to leave the installation as 'Not to Current Standards' in accordance with Figure 1. This may include the removal of doors/gates at the end of a passageway or repairing a deteriorated ceiling. However, where this is deemed an acceptable alternative to relocating the appliance, the rectification work must be carried out before the appliance can be left in operation.

Additional precautions

In addition to regular maintenance of the gas appliance, the gas user should be advised to consider the installation of an audible electronic carbon monoxide detector alarm in areas within the dwelling that could be affected should the circumstances deteriorate and products of combustion enter the dwelling.

It should however be stressed that the installation of an electronic carbon monoxide detector alarm does not replace the need for regular maintenance of a gas appliance.

Where an electronic carbon monoxide detector alarm is considered, it is recommended that it should be manufactured to BS EN 50291 *Electrical apparatus for the detection of carbon monoxide in domestic premises. Test methods and performance requirements* or BS 7860 *Specification for carbon monoxide detectors (electrical) for domestic use*. It is also important that the electronic carbon monoxide detector alarm in installed and located in accordance with the manufacturer's installation instructions.

Neighbours should also be advised to fit alarms in areas that border the covered passageway.

Additional Information

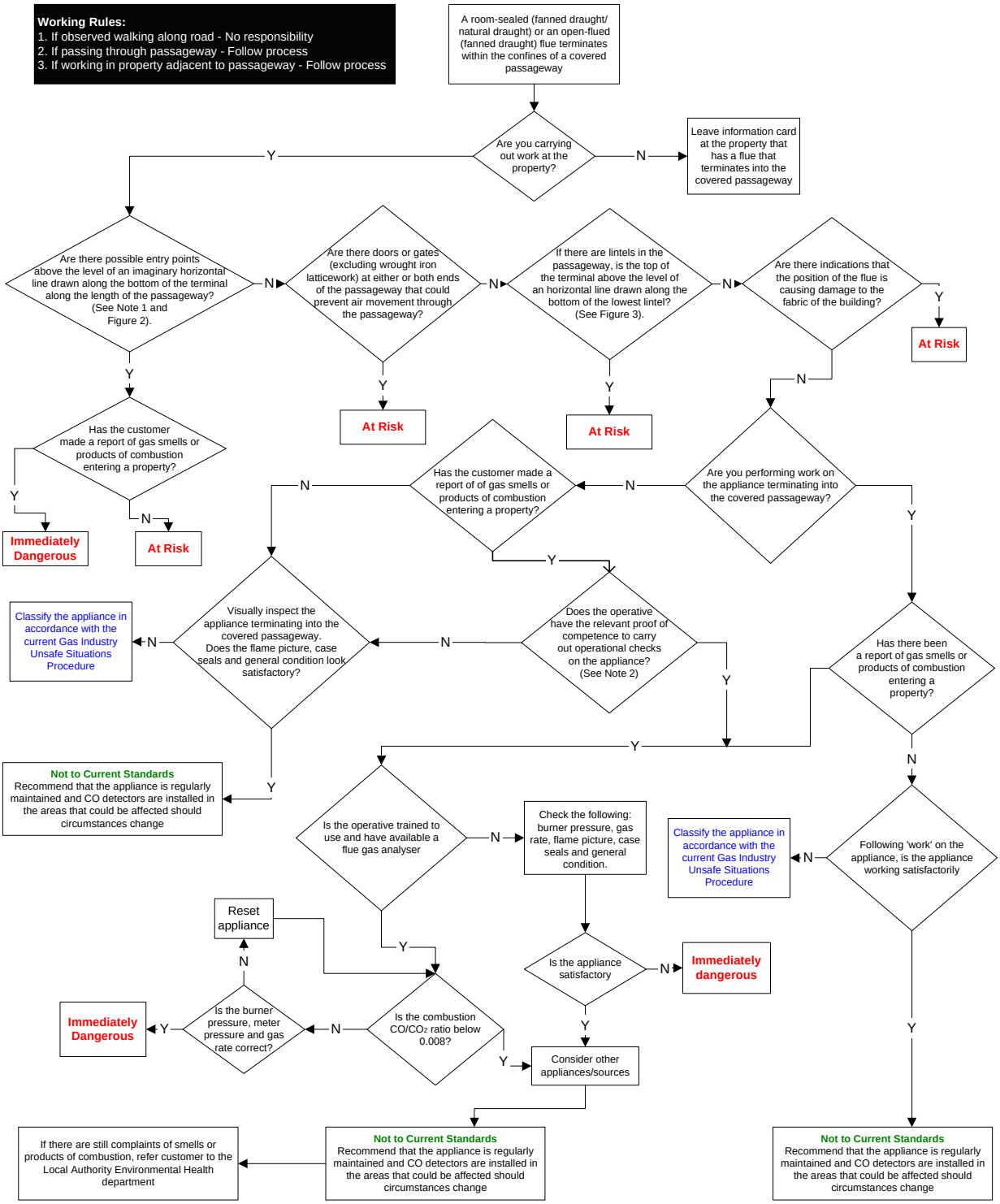
Where a gas user reports a smell of fumes to the gas operative, the gas operative should advise the gas user to evacuate the property immediately and to then contact the relevant Gas Emergency Service Call Centre listed below:

- In England, Scotland and Wales, contact the National Gas Emergency Call Centre on telephone number 0800 111 999. In the case of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), contact the gas supplier, whose details can be found on the bulk storage vessel or cylinder (if no label can be found, information can be found under GAS in the local telephone directory
- In Northern Ireland contact Phoenix Natural Gas on 0800 002 001, or the LPG supplier
- In the Isle of Man contact Manx Gas Ltd for all areas (including LPG) on 01624 644 444
- In Guernsey contact the Guernsey Gas Limited on 01481 724811
- In Jersey contact Jersey Gas Company Limited on 01534 755555

Figure 1

Appliance Terminals in Covered Passageways - Unsafe Situations Decision Process

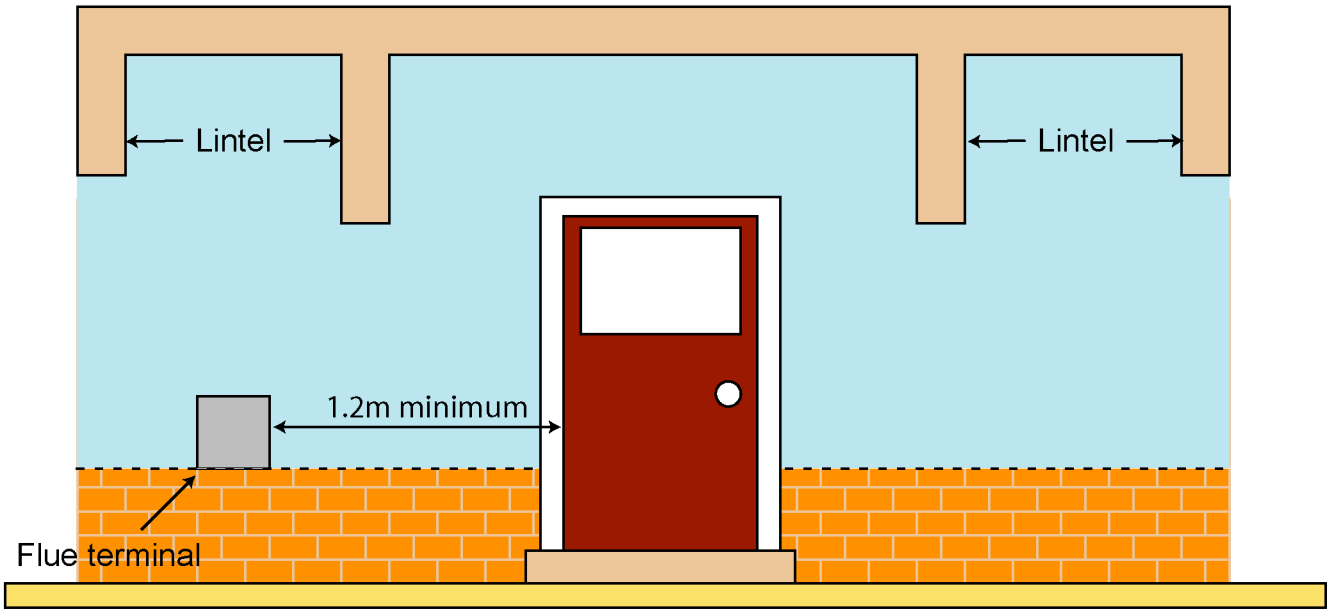
It is imperative that the following checks are carried out where appropriate



Note 1: Possible entry points include openable windows, doors, air vents and gaps, cracks or holes in the ceiling, wall or any part of the building fabric anywhere along the entire length of the passageway. However, where a door into the property is more than 1.2m horizontally away from the terminal, it should not be considered an opening into the building.

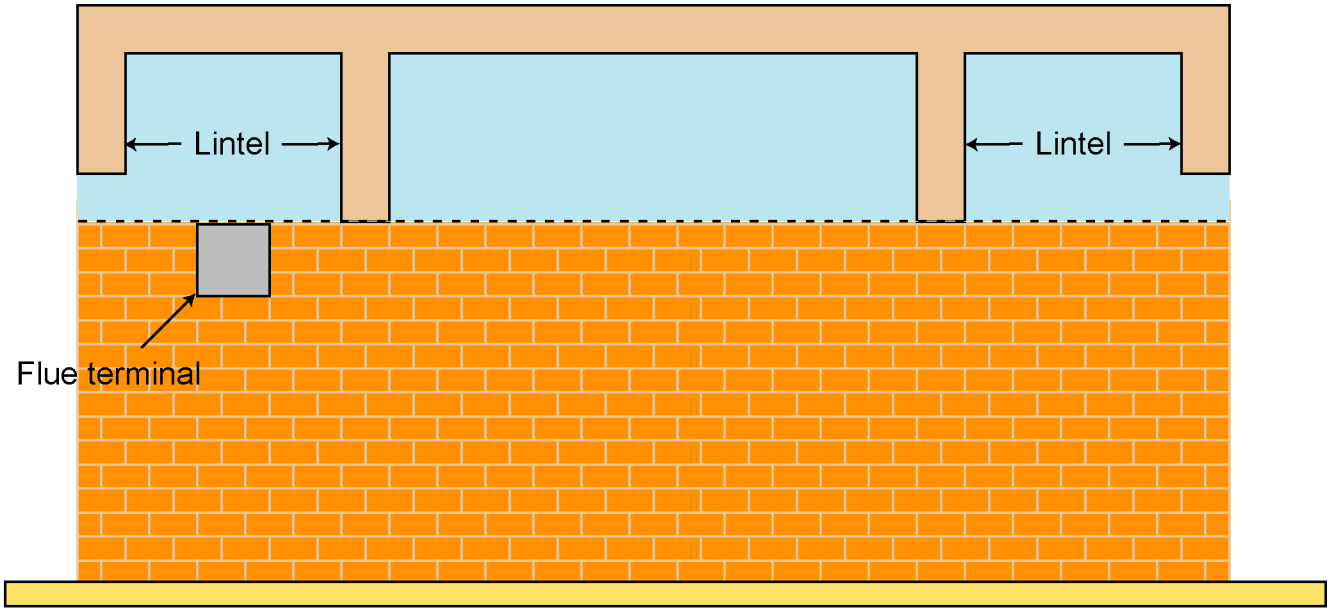
Note 2: Examples of operatives who may not have the relevant proof of competence to carry out operational checks include Emergency Service Providers and limited scope meter installers.

Figure 2



No possible entry points allowed in the shaded area other than doors into the property that are more than 1.2m measured horizontally away from the terminal

Figure 3



Top of terminal should NOT penetrate the shaded area