

Gas and oil central-heating boilers Advice to householders

From 1 April 2005, The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is raising the energy performance standard for new and replacement gas-fired hot-water central-heating boilers. From that date, in normal circumstances, a new or replacement installation will need to be a condensing boiler, to meet the higher standards for energy efficiency. Similar standards applying to oil-fired hot-water central-heating boilers will come into effect on 1 April 2007.

Why is this change being made?

You have probably heard about climate change caused by the increasing amounts of carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere. Around 16% of the carbon dioxide that the UK produces comes from the gas and oil boilers that we use to heat our homes. The ODPM in recent guidance, stated that raising performance standards is possible because condensing boilers are more efficient, just as reliable, less costly to run and they produce less carbon dioxide.

What is a condensing boiler?

Condensing boilers are more efficient than ordinary boilers and so produce less carbon dioxide while still meeting heating needs. They reduce the amount of heat that escapes through the flue, compared with ordinary boilers. Condensing boilers convert 86% or more of the fuel they use into useful heat and many carry the 'Energy Efficiency Recommended' logo. Older types of ordinary boilers may convert as little as 60% of the fuel to useful heat.

Do I have to change my boiler now?

No. The new standards apply only if you plan to change your existing hot-water central-heating boiler or if you decide to change to one of these boilers from another form of heating system.

Are condensing boilers more expensive than normal boilers?

They may be more expensive to install, but you will:
save money on your heating bills; and
help to tackle climate change.

Do I have to have a condensing boiler?

No. You should have a condensing boiler fitted if it is reasonable to do so, but the law recognises that non-condensing boilers are acceptable if it would be too difficult to install a condensing boiler in your home. Your installer should be able to tell you whether your circumstances are too difficult.

How will installers decide whether my circumstances are too difficult?

They will use the assessment procedure given in the Building Regulations Approved Document L1, which you can see in libraries or on the ODPM website (www.odpm.gov.uk).

If I need a new boiler, what should I do?

Choose a qualified central-heating installer who understands the new standards and can advise you on the type of boiler you should have fitted.

What if I have already ordered a non-condensing gas boiler before 1 April 2005?

You will still be able to have it installed as long as installation is completed by 30 June 2005.

Choosing an installer

For gas-fired boilers, the installers you employ must be CORGI registered as a safety requirement, and they should also be capable of installing condensing boilers. (CORGI is the Council for Registered Gas Installers.) For oil-fired boilers, you can employ an OFTEC-registered installer, or some other reputable installer who is capable of installing condensing boilers. OFTEC is the Oil Firing Technical Association and their members are approved to certify that their work meets building regulations. If you employ an installer who is not registered with OFTEC, you will need to make an application to the local authority's building control department before the installation work starts.

How do I know if my installer is capable of fitting condensing boilers?

In all cases, check that your installer has recent qualifications in energy efficiency. If your installer is CORGI or OFTEC registered, those organisations can confirm this. If not, you will need to ask your installer if they hold a Certificate in Energy Efficiency for Domestic Heating or an equivalent qualification.

For more information, visit <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/br/cfp-part1>

CORGI

www.corgi-gas-safety.com

0870 401 2300

For general information about gas safety and to find a local registered installer.

OFTEC

www.oftec.org

0845 658 5080

For information about oil products and to find a local registered installer.

Boiler-efficiency database

www.boilers.org.uk

For a detailed database of boilers on sale in the UK.

Where can I find out more?

The Heating & Hot Water Information Council

www.centralheating.co.uk

For general information about central heating.

The Energy Saving Trust

www.est.org.uk

0845 727 7200

For more information on energy efficiency.

Chichester District Council, Building Control Services website.

<http://www.chichester.gov.uk>

For guidance in making an application under the Building Regulations if your installer is not registered.

Declaration form

If your installer advises you that it would be unreasonable to install a condensing boiler in your home, they should give you a declaration form for you to keep. CORGI installers will issue these forms from 1 April 2005. OFTEC installers will also issue them, even though oil-fired boilers do not have to meet the new energy-efficiency standards until 1 April 2007.

Completion certificates

If your boiler is installed by a CORGI-registered or OFTEC-registered installer, you will get a building regulations compliance certificate from OFTEC after the work has been completed (to show that the work meets building regulations standards). CORGI or OFTEC will also tell the local authority that you have had a new or replacement boiler fitted. If someone who is not registered with OFTEC is installing your boiler, you will need to make an application to the local authority **before** the work starts. The local authority is then responsible for checking that the work has been carried out to the necessary standards. If it has been, the local authority will give you a completion certificate. You should keep these certificates, as you may need them if you sell your home.