



## **Guidance Notes - Operation of the APHC (Certification) Ltd. - Competent Persons Scheme**

Brief notes to help explain the operation of the scheme. For further detailed information on any aspect please see the rules for registration or enquire via our help line.

Included in this guide are a number of frequently asked questions such as:

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### **1. Why competent persons self certification schemes?**

All firms wanting to carry out work which is subject to the Building Regulations are required by law to make sure it complies with the regulations and (unless a self-certification scheme applies) use one of the two types of Building Control Service available:

- the Building Control Service provided by the local authority, or
- the Building Control Service provided by an approved inspector.

You will be charged for either service and you must make your own contact/prior notices for each job as required.

The alternative is for the firm to be approved under the APHC (Certification) Ltd. Competent Persons Scheme which enables member firms and their qualified operatives to self certify their Building Regulations work. Essentially company representatives demonstrate their knowledge and practical application of Building Regulations via inspection/checking by APHC (Certification) Ltd. and assume the role of the building control officer.

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### **2. What is the self certification scheme all about?**

It is a legal Government requirement that a certificate confirming compliance with Building Regulations is issued for certain domestic plumbing, heating and related work, that certificate must be forwarded to the local building control body within 30 days of completing the work.

Under the Self Certification scheme there is no need for the company to contact Building Control, the approved qualified supervisor simply completes a "notice" either online or via telephoning APHC (Certification) Ltd. with details of the completed job.

This notice is conveyed to APHC (Certification) Ltd who then:

- send a certificate of completed work to the customer, and
- inform the Local Area Building Control.

The Qualified Supervisor is a key individual in the self certification process. It is anticipated that he/she will be a valued employee able to accept a high level of responsibility who has demonstrated a high degree of knowledge and practical application of relevant Building Regulations.

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### **3. What does the company need?**

As a mandatory requirement of approval under competent persons schemes, the firm will need the following in place -

- Public liability insurance of at least £2M.
- Employers liability insurance (where the firm has employees).
- A procedure for offering insurance backed warranties to customers.
- Suitably qualified, experienced competent employed staff known as qualified supervisors.
- To have traded directly in plumbing/heating work for a minimum of 12 months.
- Access to regulations/standards resource documents and commissioning instruments relevant to the work activities carried out.
- To make jobs available to APHC (Certification) Ltd. for random inspection.
- A written health & safety policy statement if there are 5 or more employees.

Each trading title or branch/depot from which work activities are carried out must be separately approved under the APHC (Certification) Ltd. Competent Persons Scheme.

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### **4. Can APHC help me with notifying gas work?**

Certain types of gas work are notifiable under Building Regulations. APHC (Certification) Ltd. can provide notification of gas work to firms who are registered with Gas Safe Register. Operatives must be appropriately qualified under the Gas Accredited Certification Scheme (ACS) for the areas of gas work they wish to notify.

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### **5. How do I make sure we interpret the work categories correctly and what work categories can I notify?**

You can apply for all or just one of the areas of work listed at [Appendix A](#). Remember our scheme is unique in that it covers all areas of domestic plumbing/heating work. You must establish at least one APHC (Certification) Ltd. approved Qualified Supervisor for each work category.

The following are important notes related to APHC (Certification) Ltd. scheme coverage –

- a. Scope of works primarily relates to dwellings.
- b. Oil fired and solid fuel combustion appliances restricted to 100kW heat output or less in buildings of up to 3 storeys.
- c. Work on shared or underground drainage systems is not within scope of the scheme.

A full listing of the various work categories (areas) is detailed at [Appendix A](#).

If you are only undertaking a small number of jobs in each work area per year, then we advise that you make a decision as to whether self certification is the best option for you.

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### **6. How many qualified supervisors do I need?**

A Qualified Supervisor can take responsibility for the work of up to a further 5 operatives in the firm, however, he/she is taking responsibility for the completed work by signing compliance certification and therefore must be satisfied that the work is compliant with the requirements of Building Regulations throughout all the installation/commissioning phases of the work.

It is imperative that the Qualified Supervisor in ALL cases is fully acquainted with the completed installation for which he/she is commissioning and signing off as meeting all aspects of Building Regulations.

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## **7. What are the requirements to become a Qualified Supervisor?**

The qualifications/experience requirements of qualified supervisors are probably the most important aspects of approval under a competent persons scheme.

### **Occupational qualification**

APHC (Certification) Ltd. recommends that each qualified supervisor has a minimum qualification in line with the following –

- City & Guilds craft certificate or NVQ 2 in plumbing, heating & ventilation or gas fitting plus five years experience, or
- City & Guilds advanced craft certificate or NVQ 3 plumbing, heating or gas fitting and two years experience.

In certain circumstances APHC (Certification) Ltd. will consider applications if the Qualified Supervisor has none of the above qualifications or cannot supply proof of qualifications e.g. certificates have been lost.

Please contact us to discuss further.

### **Current operative certification**

In addition to a recommended occupational qualification, the Qualified Supervisor must hold certification in the following work areas that the business or he/she chooses to self certify.

#### **a. Water Regulations**

All Qualified Supervisors must hold an operative certificate proving competence in the current Water Regulations.

*Note: in certain work areas qualified supervisors may be exempt from this e.g. specialist oil storage tank installations. In a number of work areas it may be possible to issue approval to notify (dependent on qualifications/experience) with an action plan agreeing that the Qualified Supervisor will achieve Water Regulations certification within an agreed 12 month period.*

#### **b. Oil fired appliances/ storage systems**

- OFTEC 101 – pressure jet burners.
- OFTEC 102 – vaporising appliances.
- OFTEC 600A – specialist small commercial oil storage tank installation.

#### **c. Solid fuel combustion appliances and associated heating/hot water systems**

- APHC or HETAS heating installer course certification (HETAS – must be full 3-day course certificate).

#### **d. Plumbing work**

- Unvented hot water certificate - recognised course provider.
- Sanitary appliances – NVQ level 3 plumbing certificate achieved or recognised sanitary appliance/pipework systems course.

*Note: it may be possible to issue approval to notify sanitary appliances (dependent on qualifications/experience) with an action plan agreeing that the Qualified Supervisor will achieve sanitary appliance certification within an agreed 12 month period.*

#### **e. Defined scope electrical work (associated with plumbing and heating work being carried out)**

- S/NVQ 3 Level 3 in Electrical installation.
- C&G 2382 17<sup>th</sup> Edition combined with C&G 2391/2392 inspection and testing.
- Part P certification by a recognised course provider.

## **f. Energy efficient installation of heating and hot water systems**

Applies to work on wet installation aspects of gas/oil heating and hot water systems (specialist solid fuel heating/hot water requirements integrated into solid fuel course requirements at c.)

- Certification with a recognised course provider e.g. OFTEC 105E, C&G 6084, LOGIC certification etc.

*Note: it may be possible to issue approval to notify heating or hot water systems (dependent on qualifications/experience) with an action plan agreeing that the Qualified Supervisor will achieve energy efficient heating/hot water certification within an agreed 12 month period.*

## **g. Installation of solar hot water systems**

- Certification with a recognised course provider e.g. BPEC, LOGIC Certification etc.

**Note: certification requirements laid down in items b. to g. must be current i.e. within a period of 5 years prior to the application to APHC (Certification) Ltd.**

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## **8. What regulations/standards must I work to?**

See [Appendix B](#) for full details for each work category. You must have access to refer to these documents in order to undertake your work and for the purposes of inspection/ checking by APHC (Certification) Ltd. personnel.

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## **9. What commissioning instruments must I have available?**

See [Appendix C](#) for full details for each work category. You must have access to refer to these instruments in order to undertake your work and for the purposes of inspection/ checking by APHC (Certification) Ltd. personnel.

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## **10. Are there any additional requirements for Qualified Supervisors?**

- Any work carried out within the scope of the scheme must have been designed, installed and commissioned to the standards laid down in the Building Regulations.
  - All work in scope must be notified to APHC (Certification) Ltd. Failure to notify work will result in disciplinary action and possible removal from membership.
  - Periodic checks will be made to compare notices issued against the diary of work carried out.
  - All work in scope and carried out by operatives must be under the control of at least one Qualified Supervisor.
  - Only the approved Qualified Supervisor is allowed to complete commissioning records and in doing so is therefore accepting responsibility for the compliance of the whole completed installation. There is a legal duty to ensure compliance.
  - Qualified Supervisors should not take this point lightly, there is an auditable trail in the event of an investigation resulting from an incident.
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## **11. Are there any additional requirements for Managers/Key Contacts?**

- Membership of the scheme requires companies to have a clear procedure for dealing with customer complaints.
  - Customers need to be offered the opportunity to participate in an insurance backed warranty scheme, the costs of which will be built into the contract costs.
  - Any changes to approved applications must be notified to APHC (Certification) Ltd. in 25 days.
  - If a Qualified Supervisor is no longer in position then notification must be given to APHC (Certification) Ltd. in 20 days, so that alternative arrangements can be made.
  - The Qualified Supervisor must be present during any site visit conducted by APHC (Certification) Ltd. personnel.
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## **12. How do I ensure a successful site visit?**

When the Qualified Supervisor is visited on site the APHC (Certification) Ltd. Certification Officer will expect to see TWO jobs which the Qualified Supervisor is responsible for. The Qualified Supervisor will be required to carry out some of the final stages of testing/commissioning work in at least one of the areas of work that the company is approved for. On subsequent visits it will be expected that the Qualified Supervisor will arrange for a range of testing/commissioning work on different systems to those already seen, so that over time the full scope of approval is witnessed. On each visit the Certification Officer will ask questions about work not able to be witnessed. These questions will be used to confirm Qualified Supervisors' understanding of compliance with Building Regulations.

The member firm is required to ensure that -

- All regulations/standards documents and test equipment are available for inspection on the first visit.
  - Requests for visit dates are responded to promptly.
  - TWO different jobs that cover the scope are available for inspection.
  - Actual commissioning/testing is taking place on at least one job.
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## **13. What are the causes of problems on site visits?**

- Failure to ensure the Qualified Supervisor is present .
  - Insufficient/outdated test equipment.
  - Inadequate documents available.
  - Testing and commissioning not possible.
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## **14. What is an insurance backed warranty?**

The insurance backed warranty is not a warranty for plumbing and heating equipment that has failed to operate, it is a warranty against the member firm becoming insolvent or failing to carry out remedial work to installations that are not compliant with Building Regulations or work that has resulted in plumbing equipment and materials becoming defective e.g. corrosion of components through inadequate design.

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## **15. Who do I contact for more information?**

### Membership queries

Please call our membership helpline on 0121 705 5031 or alternatively e-mail [members@aphc.co.uk](mailto:members@aphc.co.uk)

### Technical queries

Please call our technical helpline on 0121 705 5033 or alternatively e-mail [certification@aphc.co.uk](mailto:certification@aphc.co.uk)

APHC (Certification) Ltd.  
12 The Pavilions  
Cranmore Drive  
Solihull  
B90 4SB  
Fax: 0121 705 7871

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## **16. What happens after I submit my paperwork?**

Your paperwork will be checked to ensure that it meets all the criteria and that Qualified Supervisor certificates are up to date. Where required, you will be contacted to arrange a site visit, if you are transferring from another Competent Persons Scheme then a visit may not be necessary.

Following a satisfactory visit where the two jobs are checked to ensure that the work is to the correct standards and all equipment/documents have been witnessed. You will be given approval to notify work in those categories by APHC (Certification) Ltd, whereupon following the notification fee payment by yourselves we forward all details notified to building control and issue the compliance certificate to the customer.

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## Appendix A – Building Regulation work categories

Work category	Notifiable work	Examples of work exempt from notification
Oil fired combustion appliances and oil storage/supply pipework systems – pressure jet and vaporising burners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioning or re-commissioning a dormant system</li> <li>Installation or exchange of any oil fired appliance, oil storage tank or oil pipeline including any flue modifications that may be required</li> <li>Commissioning records must also be completed, benchmark or other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small repairs/maintenance or change of small components including burner renewal</li> </ul>
Solid fuel combustion appliances and associated heating systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioning or re-commissioning a dormant system</li> <li>Installation or exchange of any solid fuel appliance, including any flue modifications that may be required</li> <li>Commissioning records must also be completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small repairs/maintenance or change of small components e.g. firebar replacement</li> </ul>
Plumbing work - sanitary appliances, washing facilities or bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of any new bathroom or sanitary appliance in a new location</li> <li>New above ground discharge pipework or where there is significant change/ modification of existing sanitary pipework</li> <li>Commissioning records must also be completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor repairs/maintenance or change of “like for like” appliances/components</li> <li>Minor changes to pipes in immediate vicinity of appliance providing such works does not alter the layout such that it affects the compliance of the installation.</li> </ul>
Plumbing work – unvented hot water systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The installation of any new UVHW storage cylinder or replacement cylinder including discharge pipework from tundish</li> <li>Re-commissioning of dormant systems</li> <li>Commissioning records must also be completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Servicing or maintaining existing systems or replacing minor components</li> </ul>
Installation of electrical equipment arising from work carried out on plumbing & heating systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation of any circuit or spur from a ring circuit to programmers, zone valves, thermostats, pumps, electric showers, shower booster pumps, boilers and other ancillary electrical components of plumbing and heating installations</li> <li>New installation or replacement of electrical hard wiring</li> <li>Commissioning records must also be completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor repairs/maintenance or change of components/boiler electrical repairs</li> </ul>
Installation of heating and open vented hot water systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full or part hot water/heating systems installation including open vented systems</li> <li>Underfloor heating systems</li> <li>Extensions to existing systems</li> <li>Commissioning records must also be completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor repairs/maintenance or change of components</li> </ul>
Installation of solar hot water systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation/commissioning of new or replacement solar collectors</li> <li>Installation of new solar water heating components e.g. pumps valves, controllers etc.</li> <li>Re-commissioning of an existing system</li> <li>Commissioning records must also be completed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor repairs/maintenance or change of components</li> </ul>

## Appendix B – Standards documentation requirements

Work Area	Building Regulation Approved Document	Standard Industry Documents	Alternatives to Standard Industry Documents
Installation or replacement of oil fired heat producing appliances up to 100kW heat output and oil storage tanks  Vaporising appliances and/or pressure jet appliances	Approved Documents J & L1 CLG Domestic Heating Compliance Guide Condensing Boiler Exceptions Procedure Note: all Building Regulation Approved Documents are accessible free of charge on the web site <a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>	Water Regulations Guide OFTEC book 3 – installation requirements for oil fired equipment plus OFTEC book 5 - service & commissioning of vaporising appliances and/or OFTEC book 2 – service & commissioning of pressure jet appliances	Water Regulations – current training course packs from a recognised course supplier Oil firing - current training course packs from a recognised course supplier
Installation or replacement of solid fuel heat producing appliances up to 100kW heat output	Approved Documents J & L1 CLG Domestic Heating Compliance Guide	Water Regulations Guide BS 6461 – chimneys & flues for solid fuel appliances BS 8303 Parts 1 to 3 – installation of domestic solid fuel heating and cooking appliances	Water Regulations – current training course packs from a recognised course supplier Solid fuel British Standards - current training course packs from a recognised course supplier
Installation or replacement of sanitary appliances, washing facilities or bathrooms	Approved Documents G & H	Water Regulations Guide BS 6700 – hot and cold water for domestic use within buildings BS EN 12056 part 2 – sanitary pipework, layout & calculation BS 6465 part 1 – sanitary facilities & scale of provision BS 6465 part 2 – space requirements for sanitary appliances	Water Regulations – current training course packs from a recognised course supplier Sanitary appliances and pipework systems - current training course packs from a recognised course supplier
Installation or replacement of unvented hot water storage cylinders and associated pipework/controls	Approved Documents G & L1 CLG Domestic Heating Compliance Guide	Water Regulations Guide	Water Regulations - current training course packs from a recognised course supplier Unvented hot water systems - current training course packs from a recognised course supplier
Installation of electrical equipment arising from plumbing & heating work	Approved Documents P	BS 7671 – requirements for electrical installations IEE – on site guide	Electrical British Standards - current defined scope training course packs from a recognised course supplier
Installation or replacement of heating and open vented hot water systems in domestic properties	Approved Document L1 CLG Domestic Heating Compliance Guide	Water Regulations Guide BS 5449 – domestic central heating systems BS 6700 – hot and cold water for domestic use within buildings BS EN 12831 – heating systems in buildings	Water Regulations - current training course packs from a recognised course supplier
Installation of solar hot water systems	Approved Document L1 CLG Domestic Heating Compliance Guide	Water Regulations Guide Solar heating design & installation guide - CIBSE	Solar hot water systems - current training course packs from a recognised course supplier

## Appendix C – Commissioning equipment requirements

Work Area	Commissioning Equipment
Installation or replacement of oil fired heat producing appliances up to 100kW heat output and oil storage tanks	Oil line pressure test kit Oil pressure gauge Combustion analysis kit (smoke reading, CO <sup>2</sup> reading and flue draught)
Installation or replacement of solid fuel heat producing appliances up to 100kW heat output	Flue draught gauge Coring ball Smoke pellets
Installation or replacement of sanitary appliances, washing facilities or bathrooms	Hydraulic pressure test kit Air testing kit for sanitary pipework systems Pipe thermometer (or similar) Flow measuring cup Water pressure gauge (tap outlets)
Installation or replacement of unvented hot water storage cylinders and associated pipework/ controls	Hydraulic pressure test kit Pipe thermometer (or similar) Flow measuring cup Water pressure gauge (tap outlets)
Installation of electrical equipment arising from plumbing & heating work	Voltage measurement device Insulation resistance measurement device Earth continuity testing device Polarity testing device Device to measure earth fault loop impedance Device to measure operation of Residual Current Devices (May be in the form of a multi function tester)
Installation or replacement of heating and open vented hot water systems in domestic properties	Hydraulic pressure test kit Pipe thermometer (or similar) Method of measuring differential system temperatures (differential digital thermometer) Flow measuring cup Water pressure gauge (tap outlets)
Installation of solar hot water systems	Hydraulic pressure test kit Pipe thermometer (or similar) Method of measuring differential system temperatures (differential digital thermometer) Flow measuring cup Water pressure gauge (tap outlets)