

Changes to tightness testing of small gas installations

In March 2026, an update to the gas industry Standard that details how to check for gas escapes on small gas installations, IGEM/UP/1B Edition 4 Tightness testing and direct purging of small Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)/Air, Natural Gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) installations, was published. This may result in a gas installation that was previously deemed 'safe' now being deemed 'unsafe', and the gas supply disconnected.

When carrying out a check for gas escapes (referred to as a tightness test), small drops on the gas engineers' gauge are allowed, called permissible limits. These permissible limits are only allowed when there has been no smell of gas reported.

In previous versions of IGEM/UP/1B, these permissible limits were determined on the type of gas meter installed at the property. However, it was decided by the review committee of IGEM/UP/1B that the permissible limits should be decided by the size of the gas installation being tested as a whole, rather than the meter alone. This was due to various reasons, but chiefly that because if a certain type of meter was fitted to a large installation, this could result in an unsatisfactory amount of gas escaping, while the installation being declared as safe. This means that when your gas engineer carries out a tightness test, if there is any movement on their gauge, they will now need to calculate the size of your gas installation and compare it to the relevant Table in IGEM/UP/1B Edition 4. This may take a little longer than it used to and may result in your installation being deemed unsafe.

Additionally, while it has always been the case in the tightness test procedures that there can be no movement of the gauge when testing pipework only, or installations that contain only new gas appliances, if testing an installation that contains existing gas appliances, these permissible limits were applied. However, in the new tightness test procedure, where there is any movement of the gauge, the gas engineer must now ensure that this movement is not attributable to the installation pipework on all installations. Therefore, they must now repeat the tightness test on pipework only, and a no movement criteria applied. Where movement persists when testing pipework only, the escape must be traced and repaired, or the installation made safe (the gas supply disconnected).



When do these changes come into force?

The new Edition 4 of IGEM/UP/1B was published at the end of March. However, while all Gas Safe registered businesses are encouraged to adopt the testing procedure as soon as is practicable, as these changes are a major departure to common working practices, a 'bedding in' period has been agreed, and so both Edition 3 and Edition 4 of the Standard are both live up to 30th September 2026, whereby Edition 3 will be withdrawn and all relevant tightness test will need to be carried out to the new procedure from 1st October 2026.

What do I do if different gas engineers give me different results?

We understand this could be confusing. Until 1st October 2026, all gas engineers are entitled to test to the existing procedure. However, where a tightness test has been carried out to Edition 4 and deemed to have failed, we would not expect any Gas Safe registered engineer to carry out a tightness test and retrospectively apply the existing procedure.

Do I have to have floors lifted to work out the size of my installation?

No. When calculating the installation volume of a gas installation during a tightness test, if pipework is not visible (such as below floors or buried in walls) the engineer needs to use engineering judgement on how the pipework runs through your property. There is no need to lift floors or expose enclosed pipework.

I have concerns about the gas work carried out by the business I employed, who can help?

If you have any concerns regarding gas work undertaken by a business you employed, or for further information regarding gas safety, please go to the Gas Safe Register website at www.gassaferegister.co.uk or call Gas Safe Register on 0800 408 5500.

