

Media release
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Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board welcomes \$10,000 fine for unlicensed gasfitter

The Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (PGDB) today welcomed the sentencing and \$10,000 fine handed down to an unlicensed gasfitter in Auckland.

Arman Faraji Bekhtereri, of Avondale, Auckland, was fined \$10,000 in the Manukau District Court for installing thirty two 45kg gas bottles at the Boost Personality Laundromat in Mangere, which created a significant risk to the health and safety of the public.

The gas bottles at the laundromat at 2/90 Mountain Road were incorrectly installed, close to a number of sources of ignition, incorrectly stowed and had no site safety certification. They were also located just metres from the neighbouring Mountain View Primary School.

Commenting on the decision, PGDB Acting Registrar Kern U'ren, said the gas bottles were a "ticking time-bomb":

"This judgement reflects the serious nature of this offence and represents the maximum fine imposable.

"There was a clear and present danger of an LPG explosion potentially causing serious loss of life and injury.

"Not only do unlicensed gasfitters place consumers in harm's way with their poor skills, but they devalue the trade and its legacy.

"New Zealanders have the right to have confidence that any gasfitting service provided to them is safe and compliant."

The new Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Act, which came into force in April 2010, creates more opportunities for competent licensed practitioners by making it harder for those who are unauthorised to continue to operate, said Mr U'ren.

"Anyone involved in plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying are required to carry a licence card. This mandatory requirement provides consumers with an assurance that the work is being legally carried out by an authorised and competent tradesperson, who is currently licensed by the PGDB. We urge consumers to ask tradespeople for their licence card, and where gasfitting has been undertaken, a gas compliance certificate should be issued.

"If a homeowner or building inspector believes work has been done by someone who is not authorised, or has concerns about the competency of tradespeople, they can make a complaint to the PGDB."

This is not the first conviction for Arman Faraji Bekhtereri. Last year, he was fined \$8,000 and ordered to pay court costs and solicitors fees after carrying out gasfitting work while not holding a current licence as a registered gasfitter and carrying out sanitary plumbing while not holding a current limited certificate in plumbing.

In that case, the Court noted the scale of the work, poor standard of workmanship, extent of commercial gain and deception of his qualifications to the consumer, knowing the Board's requirements.