Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board

PIDGEON v DEVA

Plumbers, Gasfitters & Drainlayers Board Disciplinary Decision (2026/8)

Summary

Madanjit Singh Deva, Certifying Plumber, Certifying Gasfitter, Certifying Drainlayer was charged with negligently creating a risk of serious harm to any person or significant damage to property through carrying out gasfitting. The charge related to gasfitting work at a residential property in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau.

Mr Deva did not engage in the hearing so the matter proceeded by way of formal proof.

The investigator alleged that Mr Deva had removed an existing gas hob at the property and replaced it with a new hob which he converted from natural gas to LPG. When drilling out a natural gas injector as part of the conversion, Mr Deva drilled through the base of the burner creating a hole. When the property owner used the new hob, sufficient gas leaked through the hole and accumulated at the base of the hob to ignite resulting in an explosion. The explosion caused significant damage to the kitchen and a minor injury to the property owner.

It was the investigator's case that Mr Deva had been negligent in converting the new hob to LPG and had also been negligent in not properly inspecting his work and identifying the hole in the base of the burner.

The Board received evidence from the property owners, the investigator, and a technical advisor to the Board. The Board found the charge against Mr Deva made out and considered his offending was very high in terms of seriousness. The Board accepted that Mr Deva had no previous disciplinary history but considered that any credit for this was off-set by his failure to engage in the hearing process.

The Board ordered Mr Deva to complete a course of training, pay a fine of $8,000 and pay $9,750 towards costs.

IN THE MATTER OF a disciplinary hearing pursuant to section 101 of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006

BETWEEN **MICHAEL PIDGEON**

Investigator

AND **MADANJIT SINGH DEVA**
Certifying Plumber, Certifying Gasfitter, Certifying Drainlayer, of Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau

Registered Person

DECISION OF THE BOARD
15 OCTOBER 2026

Hearing:	Held in Wellington/Te Whanganui-a-Tara on 23 July 2026
Members sitting:	Martin de Gouw (Chair), Jason O'Connor, Selwyn Hikuroa, Ian Olan, James Smith
Counsel:	Elena Mok for the investigator
Legal advisor:	Michael Hodge

Disciplinary hearing

1. On 23 July 2026, the Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board (**Board**) held a disciplinary hearing to consider a complaint by David Whitfield against Madanjit Singh Deva, Certifying Plumber, Certifying Gasfitter, and Certifying Drainlayer. The complaint related to gasfitting work carried out at a residential property in Auckland/Tāmaki Makaurau in 2025.

Charge

2. By Notice of Disciplinary Charges dated 12 November 2025, Mr Deva was charged with intentionally or negligently created a risk of serious harm to any person, or significant damage to property through having carried out gasfitting, which is a disciplinary offence under section 89(b)(i) of the Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers Act 2006 (**Act**).

Formal proof hearing

3. On behalf of the investigator, Ms Mok sought to have the hearing proceed by way of formal proof. She submitted that Mr Deva had not engaged with the disciplinary hearing and had not filed any evidence or otherwise acknowledged the hearing in any way.

4. The Board confirmed that Mr Deva had been provided with all the documentation relating to the hearing, including the time and date of the hearing and how to attend.

5. Being satisfied that Mr Deva was aware of the hearing but was not in attendance, the Board determined that the hearing could proceed by way of formal proof.

Summary of investigator's submissions

6. Ms Mok submitted that in May 2025, Jagdish Chand engaged Mr Deva to carry out gasfitting at his home. The work involved removing an old gas hob, installing a new gas hob and converting it from natural gas to LPG. When Mr Deva installed the new hob, he drilled out the natural gas injector in the large burner and replaced it with a new LPG injector. Mr Deva modified the pipework to accommodate the new hob and commissioned the installation. He then issued a Gasfitting Certificate of Compliance and Gas Safety Certificate (**Certificate**) for the installation.

7. After Mr Deva left the property, Mr Chand's partner, Roshni Devi, began using the new hob. Ms Devi turned on the large burner and used it for around 15 minutes. She then turned on the small burner and a short time later the hob exploded causing significant damage to the kitchen. Ms Devi also received a small bruise on her arm. Mr Chand's insurance company sent a certifying gasfitter to inspect the property. They identified that Mr Deva had drilled through the base of the large burner when drilling out the injector and this had caused a gas leak resulting in the explosion. The

gasfitter raised the matter with the Board and a Board contractor, David Whitfield, reviewed the material and made a formal complaint to the Board. The work Mr Deva had carried out was reviewed by one of the Board's technical advisors, Samuel Wood, who determined that the risk to people and property posed by Mr Deva's work was extreme.

8. Ms Mok submitted that the Board had to be satisfied on the balance of probabilities that Mr Deva had committed a disciplinary offence before it could exercise its disciplinary powers. She submitted that the evidence filed by the investigator in the form of statements from the investigator, technical advisor, Mr Chand and Ms Devi would establish that the charge against Mr Deva would be proved to that standard.

9. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Chand's evidence would establish that Mr Deva had come to the property in May 2025, had replaced the gas hob and converted it to LPG and had issued the certificate for the work. This was confirmed by Mr Deva himself during the investigation. Mr Wood's evidence would establish that the work amounted to gasfitting as defined in section 6 of the Act.

10. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva's work was carried out negligently and created a risk of serious harm or property damage because he did not follow the manufacturer's instructions when converting the hob to LPG, drilled out the injector and drilled through the burner, and failed to adequately inspect the appliance to ensure it was safe including leaving a gas pipe uncapped. During the investigation, Mr Deva accepted that he had drilled out the injector but not that he had drilled a hole into the base. Ms Mok submitted that photos taken of the installation by the gasfitter sent by the insurance company showed that Mr Deva had drilled through the base of the burner which had caused the gas to leak resulting in the explosion. This was also the view of Mr Wood when he reviewed the gasfitter's report.

11. In addition to concluding that Mr Deva had drilled into the burner base when drilling out the injector, Mr Wood also stated that this was contrary to the manufacturer's instructions which stated that a socket wrench should be used to change the hob from one kind of gas to another. Mr Wood also concluded that Mr Deva had failed to carry out a thorough visual inspection of the appliance as a pressure test would not pick up a hole in the base of the burner. He considered that a visual inspection was necessary to ensure no debris has been left in the appliance and no damage has been caused given Mr Deva had used a power tool.

12. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Wood had also identified issues with the Certificate which further supported the view that Mr Deva's gasfitting work was negligent. Mr Deva had left a gas pipe uncapped, which was contrary to compliance requirements, and the installation had not been commissioned in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Finally, the Certificate had incorrectly stated that the installation was safe. In response to Mr Deva's claim during the investigation that the gas pipe had been capped off at the regulator, Mr Wood's evidence was that this still did not meet compliance requirements.

Summary of evidence – Jagdish Chand

13. The first witness was Jagdish Chand. The Board considered Mr Fard's evidence contained in a written statement dated 4 May 2026.

14. Mr Chand stated that he was the owner of the property and he lived there with his partner, Ms Devi. In May 2025, he hired Mr Deva to replace the gas hob at the property. Responding to a claim made by Mr Deva during the investigation, Mr Chand stated that he and Ms Devi were still using the old gas hob up until Mr Deva came to replace it. Mr Deva had removed the old hob and installed the new one which he converted to LPG. Mr Chand stated that he saw Mr Deva performing some kind of test on the gas line after he had installed the new hob, but he didn't know what the test was. Mr Chand stated he left the property shortly after Mr Deva left after completing the gasfitting work.

15. Mr Chand stated Ms Devi told him she started using the hob after he left the property. She had turned on the large burner for around 15 minutes and then turned on the small burner. A short time later the hob exploded.

16. Mr Chand stated that the explosion caused significant damage to the kitchen, damaging joinery, electrical appliances, and causing cracks in the walls and door. Final repair costs were around $115,000.

17. Ms Devi had called Mr Chand right after the explosion and told him what happened and he returned to the property straight away. He called Mr Deva who arrived back at the property with another person around 15 minutes later. Mr Deva removed the hob and used fittings on the gas line and hob checking for leaks.

18. Mr Chand stated that he notified his insurer about the incident. A certifying gasfitter was sent to his property by the insurance company and Mr Chand understood that they prepared a report which was later provided to the Board.

Summary of evidence – Michael Pidgeon

19. The next witness was the investigator, Micheal Pidgeon. The Board considered Mr Pidgeon's evidence contained in a written statement dated 5 May 2026.

20. Mr Pidgeon stated that he was a Senior Investigator employed by the Board. He was appointed to investigate Mr Whitfield's complaint on 29 August 2025.

21. Mr Pidgeon stated that the Board was notified gasfitting-related incidence on 27 May 2025 by Mr Chand's insurer. The Board wrote to Mr Chand seeking information about the incident. Mr Chand responded providing information and photos. On 10 June 2025, the Board received an inspection report from a certifying gasfitter who had been hired by Mr Chand's insurance company. In the report, the gasfitter raised concerns about the work carried out by Mr Deva, noting that issues with the work may have caused the installation to explode.

22. Mr Pidgeon stated that the information gathered was provided to Mr Whitfield who was contracted to the Board as a technical advisor, and Mr Whitfield subsequently submitted a formal complaint about the work completed by Mr Deva.

23. Mr Pidgeon went on to describe his investigation. He confirmed that Mr Deva was a registered certifying gasfitter and had held a current practising licence at the time he carried out the work for Mr Chand. Mr Pidgeon described his engagement with Mr Deva during the investigation and requesting a technical assessment of all of the information by Mr Wood.

24. Mr Pidgeon stated that he prepared a preliminary report as a result of his investigation, which he provided to Mr Deva for his comments. Mr Deva did not respond to the preliminary report, so Mr Pidgeon finalised it and recommended that the complaint be considered by the Board.

Summary of evidence – Roshni Devi

25. The next witness for the investigator was Roshni Devi. The Board considered Ms Devi's evidence contained in a written statement dated 4 May 2026.

26. Ms Roshni stated that she was the owner of the property with her partner Mr Chand.

27. On 19 May 2025, she stated Mr Deva came to the property to replace the gas hob and convert it to LPG. After Mr Deva left the property, she started using the hob. She turned on the large burner for around 15 minutes and then turned on one of the small burners. She stated the hob exploded almost immediately after she turned on the small burner. She stated that the explosion was loud and violent and caused significant damage to the kitchen with kitchen utensils, cutlery, plates, and equipment thrown everywhere.

28. Ms Devi said she received a bruise on her arm as a result of the explosion when she was struck by something.

29. Ms Devi stated she immediately called Mr Chand who came back to the property.

Summary of evidence – Samuel Wood

30. The final witness for the investigator was Samuel Wood. The Board considered Mr Wood's evidence contained in a written statement dated 12 May 2026.

31. Mr Wood stated that he was a certifying plumber and certifying gasfitter. He provided technical advice to the Board on a contract basis.

32. Mr Wood stated that in September 2025, he was asked by the investigator to provide a technical review of the gasfitting work in this case. As part of his review, he considered material provided by Mr Chand and the gasfitter engaged by the insurance company. Mr Wood concluded that the work of removing and replacing

the gas hob, converting it to LPG, and associated pipework was gasfitting as defined in the Act. It was Mr Wood's opinion that defects with Mr Deva's work created a risk of serious harm to persons at the property and a risk of serious property damage.

33. Mr Wood stated that when Mr Deva drilled out the natural gas injector to replace it with a new LPG injector he drilled through the base of the large burner. This caused a gas leak from the burner and that gas accumulated near the bottom of the gas hob. Eventually enough gas had accumulated that it ignited and resulted in an explosion.

34. Mr Wood stated that drilling out the injector was not specified as an appropriate method in the cooktop manufacturer's instructions for changing the hob from one kind of gas to another. By not following the manufacturer's instructions, Mr Wood considered that Mr Deva's actions were contrary to clause 6.11.4 of AS/NZS 5601.1, the mandatory gas installation standard (**Standard**). Mr Wood also stated that the manufacturer's instructions for the hob stated that no attempt should be made to modify the characteristics of the product as doing so could result in personal injuries, damage, or void the warranty.

35. Mr Wood stated that he also found the following compliance issues with the work Mr Deva carried out:

    a. Mr Deva should have performed a pressure test to test for any gas leaks.

    b. Mr Deva should have been able to readily identify the damage to the appliance from drilling through a visual inspection. This would also have helped ensure any debris from the drilling had not accumulated in the appliance.

    c. Mr Deva left a gas pipe uncapped contrary to clause 2.2.3 of the Standard. It could not be confirmed if the pipe had been capped elsewhere. However, Mr Wood considered that even if gas had not actively been flowing through the pipe, bugs or debris could have entered the open pipe which had the potential to cause problems if the pipe was ever reused.

    d. The installation was not commissioned in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions contrary to clause 2.2.8 of the Standard.

    e. The Certificate incorrectly stated that the installation was safe contrary to regulation 47 of the Gas (Safety and Measurement) Regulations 2010.

36. Mr Wood stated that he did not agree with a statement made by Mr Deva to the investigator that he had not drilled through the base of the burner. Mr Wood stated the photos and the fact of an explosion supported that conclusion that he had drilled through the base.

37. In terms of the testing Mr Chand stated he had seen Mr Deva carry out after he installed the hob, Mr Wood stated he could not be sure what testing was carried out. He stated that if it was an installation test with soapy water or a manometer, it

would not have detected any pressure loss. Similarly, referring to the testing Mr Chand stated Mr Deva carried out after removing the hob following the explosion, Mr Wood stated it was likely an installation test that pressurised the system to check for pressure losses and, as stated, this would not identify the hole because the hob was not in use.

Consideration of liability

38. The Board considered the charge against Mr Deva and the evidence put forward by the investigator. The Board accepted that the evidence established that Mr Deva had come to Mr Chand and Ms Devi's property and removed an existing gas hob and replacing it with a new hob which he convert to LPG. The Board accepted and agreed with Mr Wood's evidence that this constituted gasfitting as defined in the Act.

39. The Board was satisfied from the evidence that Mr Deva had converted the injector in the large burner by drilling it out and, in doing so, had drilled through the base of the large burner creating a hole. Because of this hole, when Ms Devi used the hob and enough gas had been able to accumulate in the base of the hob, the gas had ignited and the hob had exploded. The Board noted that while there was significant damage to the kitchen, Ms Devi was incredibly lucky not to have been seriously injured.

40. Turning to the other particulars of the charge, the Board was satisfied that by drilling out the injector to convert it to LPG, Mr Deva had failed to comply with the manufacturer's instructions and this was a breach of the Standard. The Board was also satisfied that Mr Deva had failed to conduct a proper inspection of the hob to ensure it was safe to use, and had left a pipe uncapped.

41. All of the particulars being made out, the Board was satisfied from the evidence that Mr Deva was guilty of negligently creating a risk of serious harm or significant property damage through the gasfitting work he carried out.

Summary of investigator's submissions on penalty

42. Ms Mok submitted that the purposes of disciplinary proceedings were not to punish but to ensure public protection and maintenance of proper industry standards through both specific and general deterrence. She submitted that other principles relevant to the assessment of penalty include the need to ensure rehabilitation, consistency with other decisions of the Board and be the least severe penalty appropriate to achieve the relevant principles and purposes of the proceedings in this case.

43. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva's conduct was at the high end of seriousness. She submitted that Mr Deva was an experienced certifying gasfitter, yet he used a non-approved method to convert the hob from natural gas to LPG. Despite this, and despite what was an obvious risk of causing damage by using the drill, Ms Mok

submitted that Mr Deva did not properly inspect the appliance to ensure it was safe and compliant. He did not notice that he had drilled a hole in the burner base, left part of the injector in the hob, and had not capped off an open gas pipe. Instead, he issued the Certificate and left the property.

44. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva's negligence was significant and related to an appliance that was going to be in daily use. He had created a risk of serious harm to persons and property and that risk eventuated in this case. Ms Mok submitted that the following decisions of the Board justified a fine with a starting point in the vicinity of $7,500 to $8,000. She submitted that further training should also be considered given the basic but serious errors Mr Deva had made.

45. Ms Mok referred the Board to the cases of *Jury v East* (2024/21) and *Pidgeon v Rudolph* (2024/9). Mr East pleaded guilty to directing an unauthorised person to carry out gasfitting and negligently creating a risk of serious harm or significant property damage. The gasfitting work was carried out on a boat and a contractor engaged by Mr East disconnected an existing water heater. The gas valve for the water heater was not capped when it was removed and the boat owner and his family discovered gas was leaking from the uncapped valve when they took the boat out overnight. The Board considered Mr East's offending was highly serious particularly as it had occurred in a vessel which was a confined space and include sleeping quarters. The Board set a starting point for the fine at $7,000.

46. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva's conduct was comparable with Mr East's but was more serious. A hob is a household appliance which will be used every day. In addition, Mr Deva had carried the work out negligently and had then been negligent in not properly inspecting his work. In Mr Deva's case, the risks of his negligent work had eventuated when the appliance exploded resulting in significant property damage and physical harm to Ms Devi. A slightly higher starting point fine than in *East* was therefore appropriate in this case.

47. In the *Rudolph* case, Mr Rudolph, a certifying gasfitter, pleaded guilty to negligently creating a risk of serious harm or property damage in relation to the installation of a gas fire. The gas fire was installed in an existing brick fireplace and the builder who had lined the fire cavity with materials supplied by Mr Rudolph had screwed it in place rather than gluing it. When another certifying gasfitter engaged by Mr Rudolph to install the gas fire came to the property, the lining had been painted and finished and it was not apparent that screws had been used. When the fire was used, heat transferred through the screws and the clearance box and flexi flue required had not been installed meaning the heat was not safely being discharged. Mr Rudolph had not inspected either the builder's work or the work carried out by the other gasfitter. The Board considered the offending was highly serious as it had resulted in property damage and adopted a starting point for the fine of $6,000.

48. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva's offending was again comparable but more serious given it had involved failure to properly inspect, but also negligent work he himself

had carried out. Mr Deva's work had also resulted in much more significant property damage.

49. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva had no previous disciplinary history, which was to his credit. However, she submitted that needed to be balanced against his failure to engage in the proceedings requiring the hearing to proceed by way of formal proof. She submitted that Mr Deva's non-engagement also meant the investigator was not aware of any other mitigating factors personal to him that may be relevant to penalty.

50. Ms Mok submitted that the Board could require Mr Deva to pay a contribution to the costs of the investigation, prosecution, and hearing under section 107 of the Act. The usual starting point for an order of costs in disciplinary proceedings was half of the actual costs, though the decision to order costs and the amount were matters for the Board to determine in its discretion. Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva's failure to engage in the hearing had put the investigator to the full costs of preparing and filing evidence in support of the charge. In addition, there was no information before the Board that Mr Deva was unable to pay a contribution towards the costs.

51. In the circumstances, Ms Mok submitted that Mr Deva should pay the standard 50 percent of costs.

Consideration of penalty

52. When it comes to imposing penalties in disciplinary cases, the Board's primary considerations are the need to protect the health and safety of the public and maintain industry standards. Any disciplinary penalty should aim to ensure the competency of a practitioner by holding them to account for their offending, assist with their rehabilitation, and deter them and other practitioners from disciplinary offending.

53. The Board considered Mr Deva's offending was very high in terms of seriousness as it involved a high degree of negligence and the risks created by that negligence eventuated in this case. The cost of repairs showed how serious the damage had been to Mr Chand and Ms Devi's property and, again, the Board considered it was extremely lucky that Ms Devi escaped serious injury.

54. The Board recognised the Mr Deva had no previous disciplinary history but agreed with the investigator that this was offset by his failure to engage in the hearing and failure to accept responsibility for his conduct.

55. The Board declined to suspend Mr Deva's registration or licence in this case, considering it was more important that he be required to undertake training to ensure he did not continue to carry out gasfitting work negligently. The Board also considered that a significant fine was necessary to deter both Mr Deva and other practitioners from carrying out their work in a negligent and careless manner. The

Board adopted a starting point of $8,000 for the fine. There being no mitigating factors in Mr Deva's favour, the Board had no grounds for reducing the fine.

Costs

56. The Board was provided with a schedule of estimated costs for the investigation, prosecution, and hearing amounting to $19,498.68.

57. The Board accepted that under section 107 of the Act, it could require Mr Deva to pay a reasonable sum towards costs. The Board recognised that the usual approach to an order of costs in an occupational disciplinary context was half of the actual costs. The Board found no basis for reducing this figure and Mr Deva was ordered to pay $9,750 towards costs.

Publication

58. The Board determined that details of Mr Deva's disciplinary orders should be recorded on the public register in the usual way. Any other publication should be at the discretion of the Registrar of Plumbers, Gasfitters, and Drainlayers.

Board orders

59. Being satisfied that Mr Deva was guilty of a disciplinary offence under section 89(b)(i) of the Act, the Board made the following orders:

    i. Pursuant to section 106(1)(f) of the Act, Mr Deva pay a fine of $8,000.

    ii. Pursuant to section 106(1)(e) and 106(2)(c), Mr Deva successfully complete a course of training in commissioning gasfitting at his own cost in order to be eligible to renew his certifying gasfitter practising licence after the 2026-2027 licensing year.

    iii. Pursuant to section 107 of the Act, Mr Deva pay $9,750 towards the costs of the investigation, prosecution, and hearing.

60. In accordance with section 74(1)(c)(viii) of the Act, the Board orders the Registrar to publish the details of the action taken against Mr Deva on the register of plumbers, gasfitters, and drainlayers.

Appeal

61. If Mr Deva is dissatisfied with the whole or any part of this decision, he may appeal to the District Court under section 162(1)(f) of the Act. Any appeal must be brought within 20 working days from the date on which this formal written decision is received, or within any other timeframe the District Court may allow.

Dated 15 October 2026

Signed



_____

Martin de Gouw
Chair
Plumbers, Gasfitters and Drainlayers Board