



HETAS Ltd and the Approval of Solid Fuel Products and Services

HETAS is the acronym for the Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme which is the independent UK body recognised by DEFRA for the official testing and approval of domestic solid fuels, solid fuel and wood burning appliances and associated equipment and services. HETAS has a long history of service to the solid fuel and wood burning industry and its customers. Today, as it was in the past, focus is on the efficient and clean use of solid fuel; and even more so now with the use of biofuels as a means of reducing carbon emissions.

HETAS is a self-governing independent, non-profit distributing body whose members represent the range of those organizations with interests in wood, solid biomass and solid fuel heating systems from fuel and appliance manufacturers, ancillary equipment manufacturers, to government and the end user.

HETAS Ltd. is a company, without share capital, limited by guarantees and governed by a Council, the equivalent of a Board of Directors, which makes policy and supervises the running of the company and the operation of the Scheme. It has an independent Chairman, Mr Andrew Horsler, who also looks after consumer interests with Mr. Bruce Allen Chief Executive, Director and Secretary. They are supported by an Approvals Committee, responsible for all approvals, chaired by Professor Bill Kaye the independent Director, Approvals and Certifications and a Technical Panel other departments and staff look after Building Regulations, Competent Persons Scheme, Safety, Standardization and Training matters.

HETAS's governing body, its Council, is made up of representatives from the following organizations together with a number of independent Directors:

British Flue and Chimney Manufacturers' Association
Renewable Energy Association
GASTEC at CRE Ltd representing Notified Laboratories
DEFRA
National Association of Chimney Engineers
National Association of Chimney Sweeps
National Fireplace Association
Solid Fuel Association

The demand for quality in products serving the solid fuel heating market, as in other market areas, has never been higher with customers requiring to know that the products they purchase are fit for their purpose, are correctly installed, are safe and will meet the manufacturer's claims and the purchaser's requirements of performance, ease of operation, output rating, efficiency and durability. A roomheater must heat the room, an independent boiler must heat the house and a cooker must cook. The purchaser rightly accepts no excuse for what he considers to be poor performance however good the price and however keen the bargain he has struck. It is therefore most appropriate that there has been, over the past few years, an expansion in the role of HETAS as the UK Solid Fuel Industry's Approval body to a position where the majority of our work is in wood burning and solid biomass including wood pellet burning equipment and is now much wider than just testing heating appliances.

As evidenced in our now expanded publication The Official Guide to Approved Solid Fuel Products and Services (The HETAS Guide), as well as testing and approving appliances HETAS also subjects fuels themselves to tests to demonstrate their suitability, overseeing the performance of ancillary equipment and providing training and supervision to aid the safe and efficient installation and servicing of appliances, flues and chimneys. To this end it also operates a Competent Persons Scheme for installers under Building Regulations.

HETAS has always worked closely with the British Standards Institute and in cooperation with the appliance manufacturers has assisted in the drafting of British Standards for the solid fuel and wood

burning industry and where possible has used these standards (sometimes modified and updated) as the basis for its testing and approval work. For the new European Unified Market, it has been necessary for the UK solid fuel industry to take part in the production of the harmonized European Standards required for CE marking. HETAS has the task of coordinating the industry's efforts in Europe and has representatives on many of the CEN Standards Committees concerned with solid fuel or heating systems. In particular the UK has taken the Convenorship of CEN Technical Committee, CEN TC295 preparing ENs for residential solid fuel burning appliances and fuels (both mineral fuels, wood fuels, and wood products), providing its Secretariat and with Bill Kaye as Chairman. Firelighters may also be tested using the new BS EN and approved and listed as suitable for lighting the various solid fuels.

Five harmonized European Standards, developed by CEN TC 295, covering solid fuel fired cookers, stoves & roomheaters, open fires & inserts, independent boilers and pellet-fired appliances have been approved by CEN and have been adopted as the new British Standards. HETAS now tests against these European Standards. A number of other similar ENs covering Slow Heat Release appliances and Tiled Stoves have also been completed. We are, therefore, now able to approve Woodburning and Multifuel stoves and Roomheaters, Cookers, Boilers and Inset Open Fires and specialist Pellet Burning Appliances that are capable of burning both wood and solid mineral fuels.

In the interests of the efficient use of energy and the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions HETAS, in consultation with DEFRA, sets minimum efficiency levels for the Appliances it approves. These minimum efficiency standards together with the actual Gross efficiency recorded in the BS EN test by the appliances listed in the HETAS Guide have been incorporated in the Domestic Heating Compliance Guide supporting the new Building Regulations ADL1 and are therefore underpinned by legislation. These efficiencies are published so that the householder and installer can meet the requirements of Building Regulations and also make a more informed choice. HETAS maintains a list of appliance efficiencies and outputs so that installers and householders can check that the appliances that they are installing meet those regulations. This information is given in our annual Guide and on our web site www.hetas.co.uk

The manufactured smokeless fuels, which HETAS recommends to be burned on the approved appliances, are tested as either open fire or closed appliance fuels or both. In the "Guide", naturally occurring smokeless fuels are also listed as named products. It is only those qualities that pass a HETAS suitability test which are listed in the "Guide" as 'Approved'. Similarly where named grades of Housecoal or anthracites are listed as 'Approved', HETAS tests for suitability have been carried out which, together with periodic retesting and the fuel manufacturer's undertaking to operate a Quality Assurance scheme, ensures continuing good performance. HETAS is also setting up a Q A scheme for wood products.

As evidenced in our now expanded publication The Official Guide to Approved Solid Fuel Products and Services (The HETAS Guide), as well as testing and approving appliances and subjecting the fuels themselves to tests to demonstrate their suitability we assess the performance of ancillary equipment and provide training and supervision for the safe installation and servicing of appliances, flues and chimneys.

We have thus also brought into the HETAS 'Guide' equipment ancillary to the use of solid fuel in the home. On information supplied by the various members of the British Flue and Chimney Manufacturers Association (BFCMA) and independent manufacturers, we list factory made chimneys and flue pipes which have met the requirements of a European or British Standard or have a certificate from the British Board of Agreement (BBA) or other accepted test laboratory as satisfying UK Building Regulations showing them to be suitable for use with solid fuel appliances.

HETAS has also been much involved in the drafting of ENs covering the variety of chimney products used in our industry. Recently the DCLG have asked us, under the new Building Regulations, to provide test supervision and certification for chimney products such as cast in-situ re-lining systems for use with solid fuel appliances using BS ENs as the basis for type testing. In this context we have had tested and have certified the NACE system of cast in-situ chimney re-lining and supervise their quality management systems. We also list the CICO system after receipt of Type Test Certification from the BBA. We have also carried out similar testing of systems for sealing chimneys and these are listed in the HETAS Guide.

In the last few years appliance manufacturers have been asking for Approval of wood burning solid fuel heating appliances which are different in purpose to those covered in current British Standards. HETAS has responded to this demand by devising and offering an expanded approval scheme which, though still based on the current British or European Standards, is appropriate to appliances which are purchased for aesthetic reasons or for supplementary heating. Under this scheme an appliance can be assessed for "Safety and Fitness for Purpose .

Safety in operation has always been a prime consideration in the approval of solid fuel and wood burning products. The HETAS 'Guide', therefore, includes a section on the safe use of solid fuel. It is important that solid fuel and wood burning appliances are properly installed, regularly maintained and correctly operated and that chimneys and flues are frequently cleared. HETAS welcomes the introduction of a new British Standard for CO safety devices and now lists Carbon Monoxide Detectors supplied by members of CoGDEM and claimed or certified to meet this Standard. It is emphasized, however, that the installation of such CO warning devices are not substitutes for the above actions and should be viewed as giving secondary protection only. Fumes from solid fuel burning can kill and if detected then windows and doors should be opened, the fire must be let out and not used again until expert advice has been obtained. The HETAS Guide gives a 'one stop' telephone number where advice and help can be obtained.

In order to ensure the safe evacuation of combustion gasses and the efficient performance of appliances it is most important that chimneys are swept at least once a year when burning smokeless fuels and at least twice a year when burning housecoal or wood in conventional appliances. Flues should be inspected and cleaned if necessary at least once a month. Chimney sweeps are in the front line in ensuring that flues, chimneys and often the installed appliances are kept in good working order.

In collaboration with the National Association of Chimney Sweeps (NACS), HETAS supervises a two-day solid fuels course with an assessment for chimney sweeps. Sweeps who attend this course and satisfy the examiner at a high level are listed in the HETAS Guide and carry an identity badge featuring the HETAS three tick Logo. A similar arrangement is also in place in collaboration with the Guild of Master Sweeps who require a City and Guilds qualification for membership of their Association. More recently the Association of Professional and Independent Sweeps (APICS) have joined this scheme. After attending the HETAS two-day Solid Fuel Awareness Course and satisfying the written assessment they are listed in the HETAS Guide as HETAS Approved Chimney Sweeps and carry an ID badge.

HETAS has worked with government to provide a Competent Persons Registration Scheme under Building Regulations, which came into force on the 1 April 2002. The installation of a wood or mineral based solid fuel burning appliance is a Modifiable work under Building Regulations. Householders must now either obtain a Building Regulations Notice from their Local Authority or can employ a HETAS Registered Competent Person (who can self-certify that he has carried out work to Building Regulations) if they plan to install a solid fuel appliance. HETAS has the duty laid upon it to inform the relevant Local Authority of the work done by its Registered Installers so that it is available as part of the information required for the Home Information Pack before a house can be sold or relet.

A condition of Registration under the HETAS Competent Persons Scheme is the attendance at training courses designed to make all who are associated with the installation and maintenance of solid fuel domestic heating appliances aware of the special features and requirements of this fuel particularly in respect of Building Regulations. HETAS sponsored and certified Specialist Biofuel courses are being put in place for the training of specialist installers of the new range of biofuel appliances. Engineers and companies registered under the HETAS Competent Persons Scheme are thus well trained, properly set up and insured, and are regularly inspected enabling them to be listed in the HETAS Guide.

One of the benefits that we believe customers require today, is the independent certification of the products that they purchase and the proper accreditation of those who work in the industry. We have made available the HETAS "three tick" Logo for licensing and display on all the products we test and approve from firelighters to fuels and appliances to chimneys and for installers to chimney sweeps who serve the solid fuel industry. Consult the HETAS "Guide" available annually in paper form or in its frequently updated electronic form at our website www.hetas.co.uk. The HETAS Logo on the products and services for the solid fuel and wood burning industry indicates they have been HETAS Approved.

HETAS is thus playing a major role both in the UK and in Europe. With the support the wood burning and solid fuel industry, our Member organizations, our industry partners and our own experienced staff we are able to continue to serve the industry and its customers now and in the future.

9th December 2008

Note: Changed "CRE Group Ltd" to "GASTEC at CRE Ltd" 29th July 2010