



Media Release - SafeWork SA

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AUTO GAS FITTER FINED OVER WORKMANSHIP

An Adelaide auto gas fitter has been fined \$16,800 today for multiple breaches of regulations regarding LPG conversions on automobiles.

Tarek El Halabi pleaded guilty to a total of 14 charges laid under the *Dangerous Substances Regulations 2002*. These concerned non-compliant work on four vehicles between November 2005 and May 2006.

The breaches were uncovered by SafeWork SA investigators following complaints by members of the public and involved fuel shut-off devices; the positioning of the LPG tank, fuel service lines and vent pipes; and the installation of wiring.

However none of the workmanship had actually failed during operation.

In handing down penalty today, Industrial Magistrate Richard Hardy said this was not an "isolated incident or singular breach".

"It seems to me that the evidence establishes that there was indeed a course of conduct here of shoddy and inadequate workmanship."

The defendant claimed he was unaware of the relevant standards of work because no one had informed him, but Magistrate Hardy noted that the onus is on auto gas installers themselves to be aware of the relevant regulations regarding their industry and comply with them.

However he did take into account the defendant's early guilty pleas, contrition, cooperation with SafeWork SA, and improvement in workmanship to now meet all relevant standards.

Shortly after the deficiencies were discovered, SafeWork SA imposed licence restrictions on the installer until his work practices attained the required level of compliance. This occurred alongside the inquiries which resulted in this prosecution.

This investigation also prompted SafeWork SA's audit of auto gas fitters in late 2006. This was successful in increasing awareness and raising the standards of auto gas installation workshops. A mail out also followed to advise installers of the relevant standards of workmanship.

SafeWork SA will continue to investigate complaints of sub-standard installations so as to ensure public confidence in the industry.

Another recent investigation has resulted in an installer from the northern suburbs having his permit restricted, while he undergoes a reassessment of his competency.

For answers and advice on workplace health and safety and the relevant laws, SafeWork SA operates a telephone Help Centre on 1 300 365 255 or 8303 0400. To report serious accidents or incidents, in the workplace call 1 800 777 209.