



Landlord Fined for Gas Regulation Violations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Belleville, ON, May 8, 2007) - A Belleville building owner and landlord, James Sheard, was found guilty of three public safety violations, contrary to Ontario Regulation 212/01 (Gaseous Fuels) under the *Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000* (the Act).

With the maximum penalty of \$50,000 or imprisonment for a term of not more than one year or both, the Ontario Court of Justice in Belleville fined the defendant \$21,000, plus the 25% Victim Surcharge, given the circumstances of the case.

On April 4, 2005, the Belleville Fire Department, Belleville Police Services and the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA) investigated an illegal natural gas operation at a multi-unit apartment at 166 College Street West in Belleville, Ontario which might have resulted in a deadly gas explosion.

Responding to a call regarding an odour of natural gas, fire department and police personnel discovered a rubber hose running from the pipeline to the apartment building without a regulator. An immediate evacuation of the building was ordered.

“The whole purpose of a regulator,” said TSSA’s Regional Supervisor for the Fuels Safety Program Stuart Seaton, “is to reduce gas pressure as it enters a premise.” A TSSA inspector determined that high pressure natural gas was entering the building as a result of an illegal reconnection and no regulator to control the flow.

Upon further investigation, it was determined that both the meter and regulator had been removed by Union Gas, the natural gas utility company, for outstanding bills at the Belleville apartment and the owner/landlord James Sheard had reconnected the pipeline, filling the building with dangerous levels of natural gas.

James Sheard was subsequently charged with working on gas equipment without a certificate, activating a gas pipeline not in compliance with gas safety regulation, and interfering with a pipeline that was locked by the gas company. Following the trial, Justice of the Peace D. Doelman of the Ontario Court of Justice in Belleville found that, as the owner and landlord, James Sheard acted irresponsibly when he knowingly connected the hose from the gas pipeline to the apartment building. The court convicted James Sheard on all three counts — all contrary to the Act.

TSSA Prosecutor Michael Balogh stated, “This verdict should send a clear, compelling safety message to the community and all across the province.”

Bringing charges against companies or individuals for performing unregistered work, using unapproved or unlicensed equipment, or for failing to follow proper procedures and regulations, is part of TSSA’s safety mandate, and strongly reinforces prosecution objectives — to deter violators and increase public safety.

While TSSA has a progressive discipline enforcement policy, the organization works with industry stakeholders to achieve positive safety outcomes against a backdrop of compliance and cooperation.

TSSA is an innovative, self-funded, non-government organization focused on delivering public safety services. It provides not-for-profit regulatory safety services in industry sectors such as natural gas, petroleum, propane fuels and equipment, operating engineers, elevating devices, amusement devices, boilers and pressure vessels, and upholstered and stuffed articles. The organization’s wide range of regulated and discretionary consultancy safety services include public education and consumer



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information, training and certification, licensing and registration, engineering design review, inspection, investigations, safety management consultation, and enforcement and prosecution activities. The organization's vision is to be the world leader in public safety services.

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