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**PLUMBERS & GAS-FITTERS TRAINING CENTER**  
**UA LOCAL UNION No. 1 of NEW YORK CITY**  
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ARTHUR O. KLOCK JR.  
Director of Trade Education

June 10, 2021

New York City Department of Buildings  
Office of the General Counsel  
280 Broadway, 7th Floor New York, NY 10007

Re: 103-10 of Title 1 of the Rules of the City of New York

My name is Arthur O. Klock Jr. and I am the Director of Training for the Plumbers Local Union No.1 Trade Education Fund.

We are supportive of the amendment which will better define that buildings that received a temporary, interim or final certificate of occupancy on or after the effective date of Local Law 152 of 2016 have ten years to perform the initial inspection. The proposed change regarding the timing of filing a certificate of inspection will more accurately reflect the intent of the local law. The language limiting inspections to being performed only between 60 and 120 days before the inspection due date is also beneficial.

Additional comment on "Inspection Entity" qualifications:

We would like to propose an important modification to 103-10 of Title 1 of the Rules of the City of New York with regard to the person authorized to perform periodic inspections of building gas piping. These vital inspections are typically performed by the employees of a licensed Master Plumber. It is vitally important that these employees are carefully vetted as to their qualifications and experience. Many of our members have been tasked with conducting the initial periodic inspection of a gas piping system on behalf of their employing licensed Master Plumber, and this has exposed an oversight in the department rules.

Frankly speaking, this is a very important task to assign to any employee, and we are concerned that the existing department rules do not clearly delineate the training and experience of an individual who may be tasked with this important gas safety assignment by an employing licensed Master Plumber.

The current department rule specifies five years of “work experience” but does not clearly specify any particular type of “work experience”. There also is no mechanism in place to verify that the employed inspector has five valid years on the job.

As the rule is written now, there is no foolproof method to prevent a licensed Master Plumber from using a clerical employee, drain cleaner, truck driver, or other less knowledgeable employee to conduct these inspections.

We propose a simple change that would provide a much higher level of public safety without adding to the paperwork burden of the Department of Buildings. We propose that the Department require all periodic gas inspectors that are not licensed Master Plumbers themselves, possess a NYC DOB issued Full gas work qualification card. There are almost 2,000 gas-fitting professionals who are already registered with DOB and hold this department issued qualification. To hold this qualification a person has already proved to the department that they have had at least five years of relevant experience by having submitted documentary evidence from the US Social Security Administration and/or the New York State Department of Labor. In addition, the qualification requires that they pass a rigorous DOB exam that measures their knowledge of gas systems.

A Full gas work qualified individual, already registered as such with the NYC DOB, after adding the department-required 7 hour Periodic Gas Piping Inspector training (DOB Course #PLU-102), will be much more effective in conducting these inspections. Such individuals would also be easily identified by virtue of being a NYC DOB registrant already holding a department-issued card and registration number.

Rather than a vague, unverified, requirement for five years of unspecified experience, 103-10 of Title 1 of the Rules of the City of New York should be upgraded to require that any employee of a licensed Master Plumber who will conduct periodic inspections of building gas piping must have a department issued Full gas work qualification and be registered with the department.

Additionally, the rule should be modified so that licensed Master Plumbers themselves also be require to attend the 7 hour Periodic Gas Piping Inspector training (DOB Course #PLU-102) as a prerequisite to being permitted to personally conduct these inspections. This training will provide the licensed Master Plumber with the additional gap training and knowledge required to properly perform these inspections. This is very specific knowledge, not something covered in a Master Plumber examination.

We implore the Department to make these changes in the interest of public safety.

Additional comment on “Inspection Scope”:

We are very concerned that the current scope of these inspections does not clearly require that the “Point of Entry” of the gas supply piping must be inspected in all cases. The 2014 East Harlem gas explosion leveled two apartment buildings located just north of 116th Street at 1644 and 1646 Park Avenue, killing eight people, injuring at least 70 others, and displacing 100 families. This was later shown to be a case where gas had leaked into the building from outside at the “Point of Entry” penetration through the building’s foundation.

The Department espouses that while Local Law 152 grants them the authority to prescribe additional requirements, they cannot determine the intent of the law regarding prohibitions against entry into “Tenant Spaces”. We believe the intent was to prohibit entry into dwelling units, not commercial tenant spaces. We also believe that at a minimum the Department has the responsibility to add language by rule requiring that the inspector must gain access to, and inspect the “Point of Entry” of the gas piping into the building. This is critical, and would have made all the difference at 1644 and 1646 Park Avenue in 2014.

I thank the New York City Department of Buildings for your attention to this matter and urge you to make these upgrades to 103-10 of Title 1 of the Rules of the City of New York in order to increase the margin of safety for our community.

ARTHUR O. KLOCK JR.