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Making kitchens safer with mandatory testing of gas stoves

By CHRISTINA CHIN

sgchris@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: The Energy Commission is out to make Malaysian kitchens safer by making it mandatory for gas cookers to be tested.

And, gas detectors will also be a must in commercial premises where gas is used.

Stressing that consumer safety was the commission's priority, its gas development and regulation director Roslee Esman said the feasibility of making it compulsory for gas cooking appliances to be tested by Sirim before these were allowed on the shelves, was being studied.

"Discussions with the relevant authorities, including Sirim, have started," he told *Sunday Star*.

Currently, under the domestic gas cooking appliances for use with liquefied petroleum gases standards (MS 1535), gas cookers are only voluntarily tested by manufacturers and importers.

From 2016 until April 25 this year, a whopping 736 fires caused by gas and oil stoves, broke out nationwide, said Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department assistant director-general of the fire and rescue operations division Datuk Zurkarnain Mohd Kassim.

And, some 5% of kitchen fires resulted in explosions, he said, adding that of the 3,828 house fires

investigated last year, kitchen fires, electrical equipment and wiring, candles and lighters, were the culprits.

"In developed countries like Singapore and Japan, all appliances with risk factors must meet specific, international standards," he said. "And, enforcement is strong."

In February, a worker suffered burns when a gas leak caused an explosion at a chicken stall in Batu Lanchang Market, Penang.

Last year, a woman died and her husband was severely burned in Meru, Klang, while a lawyer in Penang, suffered 80% burns in similar explosions.

Roslee said the code of practice for installation of fuel gas piping systems and appliances (MS 930:2017) was revised to improve the safety of gas piping installations nationwide.

To avoid accidents caused by gas leaks, gas detectors must be fixed in all areas where gas is used.

"For commercial installations, the gas detection system must automatically send a signal to shut the automatic valve when a gas leak is detected.

"This applies to the installation of fuel gas piping systems, appliances, equipment, and related accessories," he said.

He said besides revising the

Malaysian Standards, the commission also conducts regular checks of gas piping systems and talks and seminars at learning institutions, hotels, shopping complexes and hospitals around the country to improve awareness on the importance of gas safety.

The Institution of Engineers Malaysia president Tan Yean Chin is worried about gas leakages and explosions as "almost every Malaysian household has at least one stove".

Sirim QAS International Sdn Bhd product certification and inspection department senior general manager Basori Selamat said it could test and certify gas cookers but it could not mandate products for compulsory testing and certification.

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Roslee Esman