



Botched gas pipe job 'could have blown house up'

A WINDOW fitter has been spared a six-month jail sentence for botched work on a gas pipe which "could have blown up a house".

Larry Boyle, of Millbrook, Johnstown, Navan, Co Meath, pleaded guilty to unlawfully carrying out gas works without being registered with **Registered Gas Installers (RGI)** while doing a job at a house at Foxborough Drive in Lucan, Co Dublin, on December 15 last year.

He was fined €500 and ordered to pay €1,000 legal costs of his prosecution at Dublin District Court following an investigation by the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER).

CER inspector Edward McDonnell told Judge John O'Neill that the affected homeowner got Boyle to replace a gas fire with a solid fuel fire.

Boyle installed the solid fuel fire and removed the gas one but interfered with gas pipes. He was not a **registered gas installer** and "hammered the cop-

■ Tom TUITE

per pipe to stop gas coming out".

Mr McDonnell said that this could have led to gas leaking into the room, adding there was gas still in the pipe and "it had potential to be quite a dangerous situation".

"The fact is that the pipe was hammered together instead of being properly capped off," Mr McDonnell said.

Unsafe

Boyle had told the client on a number of occasions that he was a **registered gas installer** but eventually told the homeowner that he was not, the CER official said.

Mr McDonnell told prosecution solicitor Brian Horkan that on a couple of occasions the client tried to get Boyle to come back but eventually had to get a qualified gas installer in to do the work.

One fitter looked at the work already

done and refused to take over the job because "he thought it was an unsafe situation".

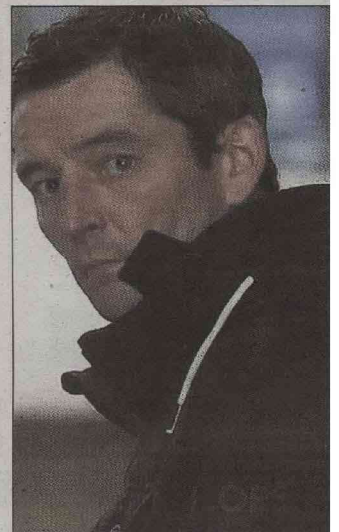
However, another qualified gas fitter later completed the work on the pipe and "made it safe".

Boyle claimed in court that he never told the client he was a gas installer but had told them he was a plumber. When asked what his job was really, Boyle, who is currently unemployed, said he was a window installer and had needed money for Christmas.

Judge O'Neill said it was "a big jump" — adding: "You were taking a chance, you could have blown up a house."

He said the situation was "highly dangerous" and imposed the fine and order for costs, which must be paid within four months or Boyle will be jailed for seven days in default.

The offence could have resulted in a maximum fine of €5,000 and a six-month jail term.



SPARED JAIL: Larry Boyle yesterday