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**EDITORIAL**

# EDITORIAL: Gas Plant Explosions

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Gas plant explosions have become recurring events across the country raising questions about  
time, 10 people were reared dead. Before this latest disaster, there have been other cases in wa



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in homes and remote villages out of the sphere of coverage of security and regulatory authorities escape the public glare. Always, when these explosions occur, they record casualty levels that should raise the red flag. In none of those explosions was anyone held accountable or demands for compensation made.

The danger in these incidences is the possibility of collateral damage as these plants are located mostly residential areas which expose the people to avoidable hazards to their lives and property. As reported in Lagos claimed buildings in addition to lives. There are tips on how to prevent such explosions which include maintaining gas appliances and have them checked regularly by professionals. Installing a natural gas detector in a home or office and regularly testing detectors to check the batteries. But like everything Nigerian, gas business has become an all comers game that can be played in homes and open streets without due regard for, again, public safety and by people who know nothing about gas or the havoc it is capable of causing if not properly handled. Some of the cylinders used to store the substance that is generally known to be highly inflammable look so innocuous that a little pressure is all that is needed to cause an explosion.

The curious thing about these explosions, in our view, is that most of them take place at locations far from industrial gas plants which calls attention to safety measures. There is also the issue of insurance compensation for victims of such disasters. That the explosions are becoming rampant is enough to move the authorities to action starting from the location of the plants themselves. This is proper environmental impact assessment was not carried out to establish the suitability of the set up in the envisaged location. Sadly, the residents of the vicinity, out of carelessness or ignorance, do not bother to protect themselves from accidents waiting to happen.

Under normal circumstances, the regulations guiding various activities relating to the safety of gas installations and appliances using natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas cover various aspects of supply and use of gas, and qualifications and duties of people involved with doing so. Provision of regulations with which the public is most familiar are: the duties of landlords to ensure the safety of gas installations and appliances in rented accommodation, attested by a Landlord's Gas Safety Certificate which must be obtained at least annually and a copy given to tenants. The pertinent question then is: does this safety measure apply in Nigeria? We are not actually talking about the existence of the regulation but its application.

gas work as an employee or self-employed persons, they should be a member of a class of persons approved for the time being by the Health and Safety Executive. The class of persons currently those registered with Gas Safe Register.

These are what International best practices demand and which makes it imperative that Safety Standards must apply to everyone who installs, alters, maintains or operates gas technologies.

licensed contractors are required to keep up to date with changes in the laws and regulations governing operations in the business.

Given the regularity of these disasters in the country, it is our opinion that rules must be made stringent so as to moderate the business and reduce chances of accidents occurring. At the moment, it appears that gas business in the country is not sufficiently regulated. Those involved in it must take out insurance policies that will take care of compensation when damages occur.



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