Ghana: Government to ensure strict adherence to New LPG Regulations

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Government is fully committed to the enforcement of the new regulatory measures for the operations of the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) industry, President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has stated.

The new government regulatory measures, agreed at a Cabinet meeting on Thursday, October 12, arises out of the need for a comprehensive and proactive action to govern activities of the LPG industry.

This follows the frequent tragic incidences of gas explosions across the country, the latest being the October 7, Atomic Junction gas explosion that claimed seven lives and left 132 injured.

At Ministerial Co-ordinating Committee meeting on Friday, President Akufo-Addo noted that the Committee, set up by him, is to ensure the strict adherence and implementation of the regulatory measures, and depart from the era non-compliance, which has been the status quo in recent years.

The Ministerial Co-ordinating Committee, chaired by the Minister for Energy, Boakye Agyarko, comprises the Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Prof, Kwabena Frimpong Boateng; Local Government and Rural Development Minister, Hajia Alima Mahama; the Minister for Employment and Labour Relations Ignatious Baffour Awuah; and the two deputy Ministers for Energy.

The Ministerial Committee is to be supported by a Technical Implementation Committee, chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Petroleum Authority (NPA), Hassan Tampuli.

The other members of the Committee are the Chief Fire Officer of the National Fire Service; the CEO of Standards Authority; the CEO of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the Director of the Land Use and Spatial Development Authority; and the Director of the Department of the Factories Inspectorate.

The President was emphatic that his government would not conform to the status quo where the political will to enforce measures for the safety of the citizenry was absent.
"I do not intend to have that as a feature of my government. The people of Ghana are looking up to us to protect them. I want to emphasise that, beyond the statement that was issued yesterday, there is a strong political will that something will be done about it. I have a clear mandate to change things in this country," President Akufo-Addo said.

President Akufo-Addo told the Committee members that the new government measures would come to naught if they (committee members) do not co-operate effectively in its implementation.

“These measures rolled out by my government cannot work and will not work if those of you implementing it are not on board, dragging your feet or not adhering to its implementation.”

The Committee members assured the President of their determination to fully enforce the measures rolled out by government, to forestall the occurrence of any more gas explosions, and to co-ordinate effectively their actions.

Mr Hassan Tampuli, Chief Executive Officer of the NPA, said following the new directives, his outfit has commenced the immediate inspection of all gas stations and the vigorous enforcement of existing regulations by the NPA.

Additionally, the NPA has begun reviewing safety protocols and, from Monday, October 16, 2017, would begin the deployment of a task force to assess the risk that the current LPG infrastructure poses in terms of public health and safety.

He noted that 21 high risk stations have been closed down, in accordance with relevant law and without regard to any political or special interests.

The National Fire Service assured the President that a full report of the Atomic Junction Gas explosion would be ready in two weeks.

The new regulations amongst other measures, directs the immediate inspection of all gas stations and the vigorous enforcement of existing regulations by the NPA, and the review of the current licensing regime to ensure.

It also calls for the institution of mandatory training and certification of the staff of Regulators, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and LPG Marketing Companies to ensure the safe handling of LPG; as well as the review of the safety protocols along the entire value chain through the combined efforts of the regulatory authorities.

The measures would also ensure the deployment of a task force within 30 days, to assess the risk that the country's current LPG infrastructure poses in terms of public health and safety.

High risk stations are to be immediately closed down, in accordance with relevant law and without regard to any political or special interests. Low risk stations would be designated for the supply of gas for vehicles with improved safety standards.

Additionally, the Cylinder Recirculation Model of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) distribution would be implemented. This model means that LPG Bottling Plants would be sited away from congested commercial and population centers and would procure, brand, maintain and fill empty cylinders to be distributed to consumers and households through retail outlets.

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