

APPLIANCES - YOU AND YOUR KITCHEN

APPLIANCES

Kitchen appliances are a major investment in your kitchen. Appliance technology has come along in leaps and bounds and selecting your appliances has become as much about aesthetics as function.

When redoing your kitchen it is important to plan your kitchen appliances in advance. This will assist the kitchen designer in incorporating the appliances as a feature. They will also be able to ensure they have the correct information at hand regarding installation and any special features the cabinetry may require to accommodate your selection.

Making your selection – When selecting your appliances you must **look at your lifestyle**. It is important to consider how much you enjoy cooking, how much you entertain and how big your family is. This will determine the size of fridge, whether you choose a 60cm or 90cm oven and whether you need a large or small hob.

You will need to decide whether you prefer to cook with **gas or electric**. There is a growing trend to combine an electric oven with a gas hob. This is because gas is so clean and efficient to work with. Cost wise there is no longer much of a difference however gas does tend to be quicker and more controllable. If you choose gas you will have to remember to replace your gas bottles and keep a spare to ensure you don't get caught short and run out of gas just before a big dinner party.

When it comes to **oven selection** most people still opt for electricity. In an oven electricity is more controllable and can

go to a wider range of temperatures. A gas oven tends to offer a hotter, damper heat and you would need to adjust your cooking methods for this. If you entertain a lot or like to bake a thermofan is the best option as it will allow multi layer cooking while ensuring equal heat distribution.

One of the most neglected appliances is the **extractor**. A lot of people purchase them but make the mistake of thinking an extractor is just an aesthetical accessory. The biggest mistake you can make is opting for price over quality. If you want your extractor to be more than a glorified hairdryer it needs to have a good capacity of at least 750m³/h.

Another important fact that should feature in your decision is the **environment**. Conscientious manufacturers are doing everything possible to reduce the environmental impact of their appliances. Look at how much electricity and water they use, what the noise levels are and CFC outputs. This way you can choose products that will save you money and have minimal environmental impact.

Installation – It is vital that you get this right. Failure to do so will void your guarantee and possibly your insurance cover. All built in ovens require ventilation in the cabinetry. If this is not done the oven will over heat. This could cause damage to your carcasses and doors as well as burn out your elements and thermostats.

When **installing a hob** it is important to use the sealing and clamping materials supplied by the manufacturer. These



are designed to hold the unit in place while allowing for the natural expansion and contraction of the hob and the easy removal of the hob for maintenance. It is also important that the cut out sizes given by the manufacturer are followed. These allow for expansion. If the cut out is too small and the hob cannot successfully expand your hob could get damaged and ceramic hobs could even crack.

If you have opted for a gas unit it is vital that you get the hob installed by a **registered gas installer**. He will be able to do the installation and set the simmer levels of your gas burners. He will also issue you with a compliance certificate for your insurance. Without this should you have a fire as a result of the installation your insurer will reject the claim.

The incorrect installation of integrated appliances is one of the most common reasons for under guarantee service calls. If you have opted for integrated appliances of any kind ensure you are dealing with a kitchen company experienced at working with integrated goods and approved by the manufacturer. The incorrect installation of an integrated fridge, for example, can cause the unit to start freezing up and cause the compressors and thermostat to fail.

Your extractor will be completely ineffectual if not installed properly. Wherever possible duct to the outside in the **most direct route**. The longer your duct the less effective your extractor and the more bends in your ducting pipe the less

effective your extraction rate. If you can't duct then ensure you use a carbon filter. This should be replaced after every four hundred hours of use. The metal filters should be washed regularly too or the unit will clog up. **Failure to duct can reduce your extractor performance by over 25%.**

It is important to note that should you place an under guarantee service call and the problems have arisen from incorrect installation the cost of the call and repairs will fall to you.

Conclusion – If you are having a new kitchen installed try and budget for new appliances. Don't fool yourself that making a decision on appliances is an easy price based one. Take time to ensure the appliances you choose truly work for your lifestyle while complementing your kitchen aesthetic. Ensure you provide your kitchen manufacturer with all the information about your selection so they can stick to the installation guidelines and protect your warranty. Finally, don't forget to budget for the installation of the products by a professional plumber or electrician.

Thanks to the following KSA members for their contribution:

