

The Homeowner's Boiler Service Checklist

By Steven Duval — Retired Gas Safe Registered Engineer, 50 years' trade experience

Keep this handy when your heating engineer visits. A thorough annual service on a combination boiler should take between 40 and 60 minutes. Use this checklist to make sure you get exactly what you're paying for.

Before anything starts

Ask to see the engineer's Gas Safe card. Check the photo matches and the card is in date. Only once you've confirmed this should the service begin.

Phase 1 — Arrival & Visual Checks

- ☐ **The Test Fire**
Engineer turns on the heating or hot water first, listening for abnormal noises — banging, vibrating, or clicking.
- ☐ **The Flame Check**
If visible, the flame should be a crisp, stable blue — not a lazy yellow.
- ☐ **The Outside Flue**
Engineer steps outside to check the exhaust pipe is clear of debris, unblocked, and safely sealed.
- ☐ **The Internal Leak Check**
Casing is removed to look for white furring (a sign of leaks) or dark scorching (a sign of overheating) on internal parts.

Phase 2 — The Critical Safety Test

- ☐ **The Flue Gas Analysis**
Engineer uses an electronic handheld probe to test the exhaust fumes.
- ☐ **The Safety Reading**
Confirms Carbon Monoxide (CO) levels are safe, and that the boiler is burning gas efficiently.
- ☐ **The Receipt**
Engineer prints or digitally provides the analyser readings for your records — crucial for your boiler's warranty.

Phase 3 — The Deep Clean (Inside the Casing)

- ☐ **The Heat Exchanger**
The main metal chamber is opened, brushed, or vacuumed free of dust and scale to help keep your gas bills down. How often this is opened depends on your boiler manufacturer's recommendations.
- ☐ **The Condensate Trap**
The plastic wastewater trap is unclipped, emptied of black sludge, flushed with clean water, and replaced.



The Spark Electrodes

The ignition pins are cleaned of carbon build-up, so the boiler lights smoothly.

Phase 4 — System Stability & Filters



The Expansion Vessel

Engineer checks the internal air pressure valve to stop your heating pressure spiking or dropping. This is an important one — make sure it's been checked.



The Magnetic Filter

If fitted under your boiler, the black cylinder is isolated, opened, and rinsed free of black magnetic sludge. Left unchecked, this can restrict water flow through the system.

Phase 5 — The Sign-Off



The Logbook

Engineer signs and dates your boiler's Benchmark logbook to keep your manufacturer's warranty valid. Check that the engineer's Gas Safe number has been entered.



Paperwork

You should be handed a Gas Safety Record or digital service certificate confirming the work carried out.

Law & safety reminder

By UK law, only a currently registered Gas Safe engineer may legally remove your boiler's casing or work on gas components. Never attempt to complete internal checks yourself.