ENVIRONMENTAL FACT FILE 03

Control of Ozone Depleting Substances Used in Fire Protection in the EU

1. Applicability

Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) used in fire protection, in a certain limited number of critical applications listed in section 3.

2. Background

Research has shown that certain substances damage the ozone layer, which protects the planet from UV radiation. These ozone depleting substances include chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's), halons and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC's), widely used by the refrigeration, air-conditioning, heat pumps and fire protection equipment manufacturers worldwide. In the case of fire protection certain halons and HCFC's are of interest.

There are international restrictions to ensure ODS are restricted and reduced (the Montreal Protocol), EU regulations, and UK and NI legislation which provide a worldwide framework for limiting emissions of ODS.

3. Overview

Key Points:
The Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations require that controlled substances must be recovered from fire protection systems and fire extinguishers for recycling, reclamation or destruction.
Fire protection systems using halon that were not listed in the critical uses were required to be decommissioned by December 2003. Critical uses and phase out dates include:

- Military [Portables aircraft 2016, Crew compartments ground vehicles 2020; Fixed systems 2020-40]
- Aviation [Portables 2025; Fixed systems 2040]
- Certain marine applications
- Channel tunnel
- Nuclear
- Police and fire brigade [2013]

4. Action Required

- Only those trained and certified can install, maintain and decommission portable fire extinguishers and systems. (This is a different but similar qualification to the F-Gas Regulations). The ODS qualification is provided by the FIA Fire Industry Competence Certificate Course Class 1; The FIA is a named

organisation which confers qualification, for details see FIA courses 'Critical Uses of Halon' and 'F-Gas Certification for Individuals'

- All precautionary measures must be taken to prevent and minimise leakage
- Records of the amounts of controlled substances added or recovered during maintenance, servicing and final disposal must be kept

- F- Gas containing systems should be checked for leakage at least:
  - Annually for systems with a fluid charge >3kg of controlled substances
  - 6 monthly for systems with a fluid charge of >30kg
  - 3 monthly for systems with a fluid charge of >300kg
- Ensure appropriate safe working practices are in place

5. Relevant Legislation

UK: The Environmental Protection (Controls on Ozone-Depleting Substances) Regulations 2011
Came into force on 20th July 2011

Northern Ireland: The Controls on Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011
The Ozone Depleting Substances (Qualifications) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011
Came into force on 31st July 2011

EU Regulations: Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations
Regulation (EC) No 1005/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

- Came into force on 1st January 2010
- Has since been amended by Commission Regulation 744/2010 with regard to the critical uses of halons, September 2010

6. Further Information

Business Link Guidance on Managing Fluorinated Gases and Ozone Depleting Substances

Defra Guidance on Ozone Depleting Substances

NIDirect for information relating specifically to Northern Ireland

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