

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Guidance for Fire Protection Sectors

Guidance: F Gas and Ozone Regulations

Information Sheet FP 1: Overview

April 2012

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This was archived in January 2015
For current guidance search GOV.UK for "F Gas"

This Information Sheet is the first in a series that provides guidance on compliance with the EU F gas and Ozone Regulations in relation to the fire protection sector. The guidance will be of help to users of fire protection systems using fluorinated gases (F gases). It is also aimed at those companies directly involved in installation, maintenance or servicing activities. Certain obligations apply to the use of F gases and Ozone-Depleting Substances (ODS) in fire protection systems. Typically these obligations are in relation to the following F gas fire extinguishants: HFC227ea, HFC125, HFC23 and HFC236fa. These fluids are often referred to by alternative Trade Names (e.g. HFC227ea is also known as FM 200). See Information Sheet FP 2 for a list of relevant fire protection agents.

Please note, this Information Sheet only refers to the use of F gas based fire protection systems. Refer to Information Sheet GEN 3 to check whether you have any other uses of F gases.

Summary of Key Obligations under the EU F Gas Regulation

Certain fire protection systems use HFCs, which are F gases. If F gases are used in fire protection systems the requirements set out in EU Regulation 842/2006 and the GB Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases Regulations 2009 (Statutory Instrument No 261) must be met. The obligations for the fire protection industry and those who operate and work on fire protection systems are described in more detail in Information Sheet FP 3. In summary, the F gas Regulation requires:

Leak Checks	Regular leak checks for systems containing 3 kg or more of F gases.
Recovery	Appropriate F gas recovery during servicing and maintenance and at end of life.
Records	Good records kept for each system containing 3 kg or more of F gases.
Training & Certification	Use of personnel with appropriate qualifications. Company certification required for all companies employing personnel to undertake installation, servicing or maintenance on F gas containing equipment. Companies taking delivery of F gases need to employ personnel with appropriate qualifications if undertaking leak checking, gas recovery or other activities, such as plant installation, servicing and maintenance.
Labelling	Products placed on the market must be properly labelled.

Summary of Key Obligations under the EU Ozone Regulation

In 2009 the EU Ozone Regulation EC 2037/2000 was recast and mainly replaced by EC 1005/2009. The Ozone Regulation had already reduced the emissions of ODS by requiring the removal of all halons from service in the fire protection sector – except for critical uses, principally in the military and in aviation. Practically all use of halon in fire protection systems has ceased. Hence, the Ozone Regulation no longer has any impact on the majority of users of fire protection equipment.

Who is Responsible for Meeting These Obligations?

Most of the obligations under the EU F gas Regulations are the responsibility of the “operator” of the fire protection system. Installation and maintenance contractors and fire protection equipment suppliers also have certain obligations, along with producers, exporters and importers. “Operator” is defined as:

‘the natural or legal person exercising actual power over the technical functioning of the equipment and systems covered by this Regulation; a Member State may, in defined, specific situations, designate the owner as being responsible for the operator’s obligations.’

Some Critical Dates

4th July 2007	Leak testing for F gas systems containing 3 kg or more . Leakage detection systems installed for applications containing 300 kg or more of F gases. F gas recovery from all systems. Record keeping. Use of appropriately qualified personnel.
31st March 2008	Annual Reporting by importers, exporters & producers to Defra and the European Commission on quantities of F gas.
1st April 2008	Labels (in a standard format) stating amount and type of F gas contained must be fitted to all new equipment.
4th July 2010	Interim personnel and company certification no longer valid . All personnel and companies engaged in leak checking need to be certified to meet the minimum Commission requirements.
4th July 2010	Leakage detection systems need to be fitted to all fire protection systems containing 300 kg or more of F gases – so end of derogation for systems installed before 4 July 2007.

Relevant Information for Fire Protection Companies & Companies Using HFC Fire Protection Systems

Defra has produced a set of information sheets that will help the fire protection sector using or working on HFC based fire protection systems understand all their obligations under the F gas and Ozone Regulations.

The following information sheets will be of relevance:

Number	Content of Information Sheet
Information Sheets on Mobile Air Conditioning Sector Issues	
FP 1	Short overview of obligations for fire protection sector
FP 2	Background to F gas and ODS use in fire protection systems – Sources of emissions. Emission reduction opportunities. Alternative system components.
FP 3	Detailed description of key obligations for fire protection sector.
FP 4	Getting started – advice on the steps to take to achieve compliance.
FP 5	Qualifications & certification – details about the training and certification requirements for fire protection system personnel and contracting companies.
FP 6	Practical guidance – dealing with numerous detailed fire protection system topics including leak testing, record keeping, F gas recovery, labelling of equipment.
General F Gas and ODS Information Sheets	
GEN 1	Glossary of terms related to F gas and ODS Regulations.
GEN 2	Background to F gas and ODS fluids.
GEN 3	Overview of markets and equipment affected by the F gas and ODS Regulations.
GEN 4	Links to full copies of all relevant Regulations and legislation.
GEN 5	Guidance on estimating refrigerant charge.

The information in this document is intended as guidance and must not be taken as formal legal advice or as a definitive statement of the law. Ultimately only the courts can decide on legal questions and matters of legal interpretation. If you have continuing concerns you should seek legal advice from your own lawyers.

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