

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

General Guidance for Switchgear Containing SF₆

Guidance: F Gas and Ozone Regulations

Information Sheet SCS 1: Overview

April 2012

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This Information Sheet is the first in a series that provides guidance on compliance with the EU F gas Regulation in relation to the use of sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) in high voltage electrical switchgear. Certain obligations apply to the use of fluorinated gases, F gases, used in all facilities operated by power generators, electricity distributors and end-users.

Please note, this Information Sheet only refers to use of switchgear containing SF₆, which is the main area of F gas use for most power generators and electricity transmission and distribution companies. Refer to Information Sheet GEN 3 to check whether you have any other uses of F gases or any uses of Ozone-Depleting Substances (ODS), as covered by EU Ozone Regulation.

Summary of Key Obligations under the EU F Gas Regulation

Power generators and distributors operating high voltage systems often use switchgear containing SF₆. If SF₆ is used, the company must ensure that it meets the requirements in EU Regulation 842/2006 and the GB Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases Regulations 2009 (Statutory Instrument No 261). The obligations for organisation using switchgear containing SF₆ are described in more detail in Information Sheet SCS 3.

In summary, the EU F gas Regulation requires:

Recovery	SF ₆ recovery during the maintenance and at end of life of switchgear containing SF ₆ .
Training	Use of personnel with appropriate qualifications for recovery. If taking delivery of containers of SF ₆ appropriately qualified personnel may need to be employed to carry out work involving that SF ₆ .
Other	Manufacturers and suppliers have a duty to ensure SF ₆ switchgear is labelled correctly. It is good practice for operators to ensure this is done.
Containers	SF ₆ containers must be correctly disposed of at the end of their life.

Who is Responsible for Meeting these Obligations?

Most of the key obligations under the EU F gas and Ozone Regulations are the responsibility of the “operator” – defined as “the natural or legal person exercising actual power over the technical functioning of the equipment and systems”.

Maintenance contractors and equipment suppliers working for the equipment operators also have certain obligations.

See Information Sheet SCS 3 for more detail about responsibility for compliance.

Some Critical Dates

Now	SF ₆ recovery from all systems during switchgear maintenance or at end of life. Labels (in a standard format) stating amount and type of SF ₆ contained must be fitted to all new equipment. Use of appropriately qualified personnel for recovery.
4th July 2009	Interim personnel qualifications no longer valid. All personnel recovering SF ₆ shall hold an appropriate F gas qualification.

Relevant Information for Switchgear Users

Defra has produced a set of information that will help users of switchgear containing SF₆ understand their obligations under the EU F gas and Ozone Regulations.

The following information sheets may be relevant:

Number	Content of Information Sheet
Information Sheets Addressing Switchgear containing SF₆ Issues	
SCS 1	Short overview of issues for users of switchgear containing SF ₆ .
SCS 2	Background to SF ₆ use in switchgear. Sources of emissions. Emission reduction opportunities. Alternatives.
SCS 3	Detailed description of key obligations for companies.
SCS 4	Getting started – advice on the steps to take to achieve compliance.
SCS 5	Qualifications & Certification – details about the training and certification requirements for personnel and contracting companies working on switchgear containing SF ₆ .
SCS 6	Practical Guidance – dealing with various detailed topics including: leak testing, SF ₆ recovery, record keeping and 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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