



## **PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE F-GAS REGULATION**

The main focus of the Regulation is on containment and recovery of F gases, together with harmonised restrictions on the marketing and use of F gases in applications where containment of F gases is difficult to achieve or the use of F gases is considered inappropriate and suitable alternatives exist.

This guide has been produced by the British Refrigeration Association to inform the refrigeration user supply chain on their obligations under the Regulation as known on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007. The guide covers the following aspects of the Regulation:

- Requirements for Leak Prevention and Detection
- Reporting
- Minimum Training Requirements
- Second Leak Check Requirement Following a Repair
- Definition of Operator

Plus a BRA recommendation:

- Storage of Unused Refrigerant at Customer's Site

And

- References
- Appendixes

### **Requirements for Leak Prevention and Detection**

- Systems containing more than 3kg must be checked for leakage every 12 months. This does not apply to hermetic systems, which are labelled as such, containing less than 6kg.
- Systems containing more than 30kg must be checked for leakage every 6 months.
- Systems containing more than 300kg must be checked for leakage every 3 months and fixed leak detection systems must be installed. The leak detection system must be checked for operation every 12 months.
- Systems between 30kg and 300kg that have fixed leak detection systems installed can have their examination frequency extended to 12 months.
- Once a leak is repaired a further check has to be carried out within one month to confirm the repair is effective.

The BRA would recommend the following additional measures:

- Where leak detection systems are installed the alarm be linked to a critical alarm, and, where facilities exist for automatic alarm remote notification, this critical alarm should be enabled to allow rapid response.
- Where liquid receiver low level alarms are fitted it is recommended that these alarms should be treated similarly to the above.

- All effort should be made by the assigned service company to ensure refrigerant alarm activated service visits are classed as a priority call and every effort must be made to attend site as quickly as possible.
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of reducing system charge, where this would not compromise efficient performance and safety considerations.

### **Reporting**

Records must be kept about each system with more than 3 kg of HFC refrigerant. The obligation will apply from 4 July 2007. The records must include the following information:

- The quantity and type of F-Gas refrigerant installed in each system.
- Any quantities of refrigerant added.
- The quantity of refrigerant recovered during servicing, maintenance and final disposal.
- Identification of company or technician who performed the service or maintenance.
- Dates and results of leak checks and leak detection systems checks.

The records shall be made available on request to the competent authority and to the Commission.

The form of the record does not have to be prescribed at EC level, however, a sample log book can be found in Appendix 1 as a suggestion.

### **Minimum Training Requirements**

For the present in the UK the minimum requirement for personnel handling F-Gas refrigerants is the City & Guilds 2078 certificates in Handling Refrigerants or the CITB Safe Handling of Refrigerants certificate.

Consultations are still continuing across the 27 Member States and the above may be subject to change in 2008.

### **Second Leak Check Requirement Following a Repair**

It is a requirement that all refrigerant leak repairs receive an additional check. This second check has to be completed within one month of the repair being completed. The Commission has agreed that this does not have to take place on a separate day or require a return visit.

In practice this means that a repair could be made by the engineer and the additional check performed at a time deemed suitable by the engineer. Practical considerations will influence this decision, such as the accessibility of the repair. For example both events can have the same date with the second check start time being shortly after the repair finish time.

Records will need to show the leak repair as the first event and the additional check as the second event. The engineer will need to record the date, start and finish times for each event.

## **Definition of Operator**

Operator means the natural or legal person exercising *actual power over the technical functioning* of the equipment and systems covered by the Regulation. A Member State may, in defined, specific situations, designate the owner as being responsible for the operator's obligations.

The *actual power over the technical functioning* of a piece of equipment or system should be understood as including the following elements:

- Free access to the system, which entails the possibility to supervise its components and their functioning, and the possibility to grant access to third parties.
- The control over the day-to-day functioning/ running, for example, being able to take the decision to switch it on or off.
- The power (including financial power) to decide on technical modifications, modification of the quantities of F-Gases in the system, and to have checks or repairs carried out.

If all these elements are devolved by the operator to a third party through contractual arrangements, the authority of operator and the responsibilities attached to it under Regulation 842/2006 should be deemed transferred to that third party, provided that such a transfer is compatible with national law. In particular, for such a transfer to be deemed valid in a given Member State, the penalties laid down in pursuance to Article 13 must be applicable to the person recognised as operator on the basis of contractual arrangements.

If these elements are only partially transferred, the responsibilities of operator should not be deemed transferred.

Fuller details on the definition of operators and contractual examples can be found in the Commission's guidance and interpretation paper attached as Appendix 2.

## **Storage of Unused Refrigerant at Customer's Site – BRA Recommendation**

It is recommended that refrigerant left over following installation, service, maintenance or repair should NOT be left at the customer's site but should be returned to the supplier or contracting company's premises.

## **References**

Further information on the F-Gas Regulation can be found at :

[www.acrib.org.uk](http://www.acrib.org.uk)

[www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/fgas/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/fgas/index.htm)

[www.dti.gov.uk/innovation/sustainability/fgases/page28889.html](http://www.dti.gov.uk/innovation/sustainability/fgases/page28889.html)

[www.epeeglobal.org](http://www.epeeglobal.org)

## **Appendices**

- 1 ACRIB logbook
- 2 Commission's guidance and interpretation – 'Operator'

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