

Practical examples demonstrate that measures in place preventing leakage already led to considerable refrigerant emission reductions

The RAC Magazine Conference June 21 2005. London

Brussels, June 28, 2005 A conference on containment and refrigerant leakage prevention was organized by the RAC Magazine on June 21st in London and showed that strong drivers exist to minimise refrigerant leakages. Not just environmental concerns, but economic ones as well, with clear benefits to users, in terms of energy efficiency savings and reduced refrigerant costs, when leak tight equipment is used. This bodes well with the prospect of an EU regulatory framework that is expected to be introduced in 2007, where users of refrigeration and air conditioning equipment will have a regulatory requirement to monitor their equipment and refrigerant use.

The conference heard from panel discussions about current practices that have led to significant improvements in containment and maintenance practices. This conference also provided to the end users and other stakeholders with essential information in order to facilitate compliance with the future EU regulation on fluorinated gases (F-gas Regulation).

The main applications of F-gases and particularly hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are as cooling agents in refrigeration and air conditioning systems. Although the greenhouse warming potential of HFC is much lower than that of the CFCs and H-CFCs they replace, minimizing leaks through better design, manufacturing, maintenance in their applications is key to their responsible use.

Knowledge and application of best practices in fundamental design and maintenance, e.g. better service access, avoidance of design errors and vibrations, exist underlined John Austin Davies R&D Director of Epta U.K., but need to be reinforced and more widely applied. *“Very tight systems are possible as demonstrated in particular in the Netherlands with the STEK system for emission containment and according to leak tightness studies for German supermarkets”* commented Friedrich Busch, Director General of EPEE.

At Airedale, a manufacturer of refrigerant and air-conditioning systems, state of the art design and manufacture to eliminate potential leakage and vibration points are already applied. With the use of fail safe devices and system integrity testing through trained personnel such optimum ‘leak-free’ equipments demonstrate their enhanced performances.

Peter Radford from Parasense showed that high performance refrigerant detection systems and energy monitors are also available and have shown their efficiency in real conditions of use.

Sainsbury’s supermarkets demonstrated that they are already in position to meet most of the obligations foreseen by the F-Gas regulation proposal: equipment design; leak detection; regular inspections; servicing by certified contractors; and logbook emission records and that this has already led to substantial emission reduction and cost savings.



“Indeed, underlined Busch, extra costs of containment and monitoring measures are compensated by less refrigerant use, less equipment failures and less related maintenance costs”.

Jane Gartshore, Training Manager of Cool Concerns, also showed that the practical aspects of good management of equipment and emission prevention, on-site troubleshooting and preparation for inspections, can reduce refrigerant emissions and related problems for end-users.

In conclusion the main lesson of the RAC Conference on refrigerant containment and leakage prevention meeting was clearly that practices for containment of refrigerants already work and can reduce emissions by a factor of ten or more. It showed how industry and end-users are determined to use F-gas refrigerant responsibly, minimise their impact on the environment without compromising on their safety or their cost and to ensure that “containment” policy, as laid in the current EU draft law, works.

ENDS

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