



EFCTC position

Brussels, 4 October 2012

EFCTC Statement on the presence of Methyl chloride (Chloromethane, R-40) Contamination in R-134a.

The members of the European Fluorocarbon Technical Committee (EFCTC, a sector group of the European Chemical Industry Council, CEFIC), produce and supply R-134a (1,1,1,2-Tetrafluoroethane, CAS 811-97-2) for refrigeration purposes, which meets the AHRI-700 specifications and in practice has higher purity exceeding AHRI-700 specifications (virgin material). Consequently, R-134a will only contain trace organic impurities. None of the individual organic impurities in the virgin R-134a have concentration levels that affect the performance and reliability of the R-134a refrigerant. The members of EFCTC have registered R-134a under the EU REACH Regulation (1907/2006) and submitted its classification in accordance with the CLP Regulation (1272/2008). In this context, R-134a is not classified as a hazardous substance and does not require any labelling beyond the H 280 symbol (Liquefied gas).

EFCTC shares concerns with the supply chain about products that have been placed on the market consisting solely, or containing high concentrations, of R-40 and are intentionally presented as refrigerant R-134a and labelled accordingly. This practice is in flagrant breach of the principles of Responsible Care[®] to which all EFCTC Members have committed themselves, and should be subject to vigorous criminal enforcement action.

Pursuant to Table 3.1 of the EU CLP Regulation, R-40 (Methyl chloride, CAS 74-87-4) is classified as a Category 1 Flammable Gas (H220) and as a Category 2 Carcinogen (H373), and the substance should be handled accordingly when used either on its own or in a mixture where it is present in high concentrations. R-40 has not been used in refrigerant applications for many years as it was discontinued due to its toxicity and flammability.

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It is important to make a distinction between refrigerants which may have trace impurities but controlled to a rigorous specification and products where hazardous substances are not trace impurities, but present in higher concentrations¹.

R-134a, supplied by members of EFCTC, meets or exceeds AHRI-700 specification and continues to be safe to use in equipment and installations designed to function on R-134a.

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¹ Relevant to Methyl Chloride, individual concentrations of hazardous CMR (carcinogenic, mutagenic, toxic for reproduction) substances exceeding 1000 ppm trigger an obligation to classify and label the product for the hazardous component(s).

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