

16 September 2019

EFCTC stepping up actions against Illegal Trade in HFCs

Whilst many have taken their Summer vacations, the activities to combat illegal trade in HFCs have gained further momentum. Work has been consolidated on the valuable information received from over 150 leads on the EFCTC “Action Line” and a number of “evidence packs” have been produced and are being discussed with National Enforcement Authorities. It is anticipated that this will lead rapidly to both further seizures of illegally imported HFCs as well as prosecutions of offenders. Seizures have already been made in Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Romania.

One of the main routes of entry into the European Union has been the sale of HFCs in disposable cylinders. These are illegal in the European Union. Investigations into this trade has led to over 180 take-downs of products from Internet marketplaces across the whole of the EU.

EFCTC has written to the major automobile suppliers that service a large proportion of the fleet through their official dealerships requesting that, “through your contacts with these companies, you make them aware of the situation regarding the illegal imports of HFC-134a and that they are directed to seek assurance/guarantee that their suppliers can demonstrate that their HFC-134a is legally sourced from a holder of an annual quota”. Similarly, EFCTC has advised the Express Delivery community that the transportation of non-compliant (disposable) cylinders is an infringement of the EU’s rules on the transportation of dangerous goods (ADR).

“It is vital that we continue and step up actions against illegal trade in HFCs.” stressed EFCTC Chairman Nick Campbell, “Enforcement Authorities in Member States are engaged in detecting and confiscating illegal HFCs and illegal disposable cylinders. Internet companies are preventing offers of illegal products and packages on their marketplaces. The message that companies using illegal HFCs must understand the possible safety issues as well as the environmental damage from their emissions is being strongly emphasized.”

Dr. Campbell added, “Much of the work carried out has been the result of information received through the EFCTC “Action Line” that permits any individual to report alleged suspect HFC offerings confidentially to a trusted and independent contractor using a webform (in any language): <https://efctc.integrityline.org>. We are strongly encouraging further contributions to help us continue this fight against illegal trade in HFCs. All information is carefully analysed and acted upon by our independent contractor. Turning away and not reporting suspect offers risks further embedding of illegal practices, we have all a duty to remain vigilant”

The European FluoroCarbons Technical Committee is a Cefic Sector Group that monitors legislation related to HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons), and HFOs (hydrofluoro-olefins) in the EU and at global level. Fluorocarbons are used as feedstock, as refrigerants, as solvents and as blowing agents for insulation plastic foams.

Contact: EFCTC Chairman: Dr. N. Campbell, nick.campbell@arkema.com
EFCTC Secretariat: Angelica Candido, anc@cefic.be