

DuPont Fire Extinguishants

CLEAN AGENT FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM

Lack of Regulatory Restriction on HFCs in Fire Extinguishant Applications

A number of voluntary and regulatory initiatives exist today that are designed to protect the environment from ozone depletion and climate change. Unfortunately, confusion around these initiatives can often lead to misinterpretations and misunderstandings around their intent. The confusion is especially evident with hydrofluorocarbons in clean agent fire suppression applications.

None of the current key global regulatory initiatives place restrictions on the use of HFCs in fire protection. The lack of restriction is due to established maintenance programs that have resulted in very low emission levels, proven safety and the unmatched performance of these clean agents.

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol requires developed countries to meet target net emissions of a basket of greenhouse gases (GHGs) over the period 2008-2012. That grouping of GHGs includes carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulfur hexafluoride. The Kyoto Protocol was ratified in February 2005.

In August 2003 the European Union (EU) proposed a "Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Certain Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases," which is also commonly referred to as the F-Gas Regulation. The F-Gas Regulation is one of the tactical programs that the EU views as part of its efforts to meet the emission reduction goals detailed in the Kyoto Protocol.

The objective of the F-Gas Regulation is to prevent and reduce emissions of fluorinated gases (HFCs, PFCs and sulfur hexafluoride) covered by the Kyoto Protocol. Within the fire suppression industry, HFC emissions are currently at such low levels that fire suppression is considered a non-emissive source. As a result, no restrictions are imposed for HFCs in fire suppression as part of the F-Gas Regulation. This is largely due to voluntary codes of practice proactively undertaken by the fire suppression industry.

The British Fire Protection Systems Association (BFPSA), produced a summary of the F-Gas Regulation for the fire protection industry, and stated, "There is no restriction on the use or placing on the market of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)." The BFPSA document further asserts, "Adherence to the terms of the proposed regulations will ensure that HFCs continue to be recognized as viable, environmentally acceptable agents for use in fixed fire protection systems."

Additionally, the U.S. EPA issued a HFC Emissions Estimating Program (HEEP) Report on the use of HFCs. This is an all-inclusive report on emissions of HFCs for refrigeration, fire protection and other applications. Again, the fire protection industry was recognized for its Voluntary Codes of Practice (VCOP) program and very low emissions. I have worked directly with the EPA Climate Change people for years. They do not intend to



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restrict or ban HFCs. In fact, the EPA has made recent recommendations to NASCAR to stop using halons in favor of HFC systems that are safe for people, safe for assets and safer for the environment.

Despite the consistently proven performance benefits of HFC clean agent fire extinguishant technologies, questions still exist regarding the environmental regulations that address HFC emissions. Neither the Kyoto Protocol nor F-Gas Regulation imposes limits on the use of HFCs in fire suppression. The limitations in these regulations are focused on areas where emissions are more prevalent and significantly higher than in fire suppression applications. The fire protection

industry expects emissions will decrease further with continued equipment improvements making HFC clean agent fire extinguishants a sustainable technology into the future.

HFCs are well-established as reliable and highly effective clean agent fire extinguishants that are essential for ensuring life safety and protecting high value property in the event of a fire. DuPont™ FM-200™ is one of our HFC clean agents that continue to expand into new global markets, and we are committed to the clean agent fire suppression industry.

For more information on DuPont Fire Extinguishants, please contact your local representative:

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