

# F-GAS IS NOT GOING ANYWHERE

Despite the outcome of the EU Referendum, the cooling industry will not see any change to regulations covering the use of fluorinated refrigerant gases (F-Gas) or the requirement for refrigerant handling registration, according to experts.

While the original F-Gas Regulation (EC517/2014) emanated from Brussels and was driven by the European Commission, it was transposed directly into UK law. Therefore, it is now part of the British legal system and it would require Westminster to repeal one of its own laws for the industry's F-Gas measures to be changed. The EU regulation itself has no legal status.

As a result, there will be no impact for the foreseeable future on companies operating in the UK market and no change to the mandatory requirements for certification with industry registration schemes like Refcom.

"Our government, the Environment Agency and regional equivalents are all committed to environmental responsibility so I cannot foresee any circumstance where we would rescind this law," said Graeme Fox, senior mechanical engineer at the Building Engineering Services Association (BESA).

## COMPETENCE

"The certification and personnel competence requirements have all been set at UK level. They are all different across the EU; even though we have the mutual recognition status between international schemes.

"So again, despite the Brexit vote, there will be no change to the requirements for legally working with fluorinated greenhouse gases and systems containing them here in the UK," added Mr Fox, who is a former President of the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration European Association (AREA) and a director of the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Board (ACRIB).

It has been a legal requirement since July 2009 for all businesses that install, maintain or service stationary equipment containing or designed to contain f-gas refrigerants to obtain an F-Gas Company Certificate.

Refcom, which was set up by BESA (then the HVCA) in 1994, was appointed by the government as a certification body to provide this mandatory service for the refrigeration and air conditioning sectors. It works with the Environment Agency to ensure the regulations are properly enforced and refrigerant reclamation carried out.

Refcom now accounts for more than 80% of company certificates covering the UK refrigerant handling market making it a key component of the UK's efforts to control emissions of greenhouse gases and tackle global warming.

The UK refrigeration and air conditioning industry is actually looking to extend international co-operation by helping establish a worldwide scheme for certifying refrigerant handling competence on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Mr Fox represents the UK on the working party developing the UNEP scheme. He said competence requirements would be set at a much lower level than what is already in place in the UK to reflect the wide variance in international practices and the fact that many countries currently have no competence scheme at all.

So, although the UK is happy to help UNEP establish this much needed method for harmonising global standards, Mr Fox said it was "highly unlikely that the post-Brexit UK government will seek to water down our own hard won professional standards" to meet the lower minimum set by a new international scheme.