

## Fluorinated greenhouse gases

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In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 517/2014, this report concerns the availability for maintenance personnel of training in the safe handling of climate-friendly technologies replacing fluorinated greenhouse gases or in reducing their use.

Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 requires a reduction in the quantities of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) that companies are allowed to place on the market in the European Union through imports or production.

When supplies of HFCs are reduced, manufacturers of equipment and products currently using HFCs will have to opt for substitute refrigerants whose properties, such as certain level of flammability or a high pressure, are sometimes unknown to end-users and equipment maintenance staff.

In order to ensure the safety of the installation and use of such equipment, staff should have access to appropriate training throughout the Union.

This report analyses the relevant EU legislation. It also examines the training currently available in all Member States as well as the participation rate of maintenance staff in these training courses in addition to other training initiatives currently in place.

Adequacy of legislation: the report concludes that the existing legislative framework, complemented by the existing European standards, appears sufficient to ensure the safe handling of such equipment provided that these rules are respected. Therefore, it is not necessary to resort to further European-wide legislation at the current stage

Existence of appropriate training materials: the problem of training is taken very seriously by the various stakeholders involved. In addition, there is now a satisfactory availability of training materials that can be used in training programmes on substitute refrigerants (EN 13331, European Association of Refrigeration and Air Conditioning guidelines - AREA, a Real Alternatives project funded by the EU, many national activities), many of which are freely available to technicians in all Member States.

Obstacles related to training opportunities: the information provided shows that the training in the use of climate-friendly substitution technologies currently available presents shortcomings in practice. These problems concern in particular:

- lack of practical training infrastructure: delays in setting up an adequate number of training infrastructures appear to be linked to the investment costs required for their creation and their operating costs. It is therefore necessary to identify ways to encourage investment in such infrastructures;
- the lack of qualified engineers and technicians: according to the figures, the participation rate in training courses is insufficient to meet the medium- and long-term requirements for the phasing out of HFCs. In order to increase the number of technicians with the required training, the report stresses the importance of (i) using train the trainer programmes to address the existing geographical imbalance; (ii) ensuring that large retailers permit only technicians trained to work on their systems; (iii) defining, at the level of industry associations, minimum training requirements or setting up skill card systems enabling technicians to have an official record of their training and skills profile.

The report recommends intensifying efforts to ensure that the supply of training can meet the future increase in demand.

In this context, the Commission has made training on substitute refrigerants one of the key priorities of the 2016 call for proposals under the [LIFE programme](#).

Moreover, national authorities could use available funding programmes to support the development of appropriate infrastructure and training programmes and to raise awareness of and disseminate existing rules and standards.