



PRESS RELEASE FROM ACRIB

New F Gas qualifications take shape

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It has been well publicised that all personnel whose work involves handling of refrigerants within the scope of the F Gas Regulation need to take the new City & Guilds 2079 Assessment, or the CITB equivalent, by July 2011. The current qualifications City & Guilds 2078 and CITB provide only temporary evidence of qualification in the mean time.

It will be welcome news then that the first of the new F Gas Qualifications have now started to be awarded in the UK. ACRIB believes that the UK is one of the first member states to have set up the new qualification scheme based on the Commission Regulation (EC) No 303/2008 which established minimum requirements for the certification of companies and personnel as regards stationary refrigeration, air-conditioning and heat pump equipment containing certain fluorinated greenhouse gases.

Following extensive consultation between DEFRA, ACRIB, SummitSkills and the two nominated awarding bodies City and Guilds and CITB Construction Skills, the new qualifications are now ready to roll out across the UK.

City and Guilds held an introductory day for prospective centres in the summer of 2008 which outlined the contents of the new Level 2 award in F-Gas and ODS Regulations – known as the “2079” which will eventually replace the existing 2078. The first course for engineers took part as a pilot in December 2008, and led to the successful certification of all seven of the candidates who took part. This was a five day course, with modules covering refrigeration theory, how to measure system performance, environmental impact, understanding of component operation, hazards of refrigerant, relevant legislation and handling of cylinders. The final assessment included an on line theory test and a practical exercise in which candidates worked on a test rig, adding refrigerant, checking for correct system operation and leakage; and recovering refrigerant. In addition all candidates had to

carry out risk assessments, safe working procedures and fill in waste consignment notes and refrigerant log sheets.

Naturally, as the first group to go through the course there was some initial apprehension, particularly in the areas of using pressure-enthalpy diagrams and the theory of indirect leak testing. However, assessor John Ellis remarked that "overall the candidates performed extremely well and took the course extremely seriously. As a result they all learned something new about how to improve the operation of refrigeration systems". Even the assessment results provide guidance as to their areas of strength and weakness. Tony MacWhirter of Refrigeration and Air Conditioning contractor MacWhirter Ltd, who employ five of the engineers who have now gained their City and Guilds 2079 commented "It was felt to be a useful experience by all who took part, and the engineers found the handbooks particularly helpful. We are now planning a schedule to put the rest of our workforce through the course".

The City and Guilds 2079 qualification will eventually become available throughout the UK with more centres becoming approved over the next few months – see the City and Guilds website <http://www.cityandguilds.com/cps/rde/xchg/SID-B373B82A-99B539AC/cgonline/hs.xsl/24432.html> for details of the new qualification and currently approved centres.

The first public course in December was held at Ellis Training Centre in Cuffley. John Ellis has been following closely the development of the F Gas Regulations since Regulation 378/2000, the original proposal, was adopted by the Commission. He believes that the new City and Guilds Refrigerant Handling qualification will be welcomed by both the experienced engineer, who may have some gaps in their theory knowledge, and the recent apprentices who need to apply what they have learned at college.

The new CITB refrigerant handling assessment is being launched in February 2009.

Some concerns remain with ACRIB that with only 2 and half years to go before the deadline for all 40,000 engineers to be re-qualified to these new levels, the timescales are still very tight. However it welcomes the news that these qualifications are now becoming available and will be monitoring industry take up closely over the next few years.

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