

ACT NOW TO STOP THE USE OF ILLEGAL COOLANTS

The EU is phasing down the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) to limit global climate change. Sadly, criminal networks are undermining these efforts by smuggling them in huge quantities into Europe. Not only does their actions compromise the EU's climate goals to become carbon neutral by 2050 and harm the environment, but it also puts you and the public at risk.

4 REASONS TO AVOID USING ILLEGAL HFCs

1

DANGER TO THE PUBLIC

Illegal refrigerants that do not meet health and safety regulations pose a serious risk for installers and end-users as they may contain high pressure, toxic and/or flammable substances and may be overcharged.



Spot the signs

In the EU, legal HFCs are supplied in purpose-built refillable containers, NOT disposable ones. The contents of the container must be clearly labelled on the cylinder and comply with EU REACH and CLP guidelines. Any refrigerant delivery must also be accompanied by a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) issued by the gas producer or supplier.



3

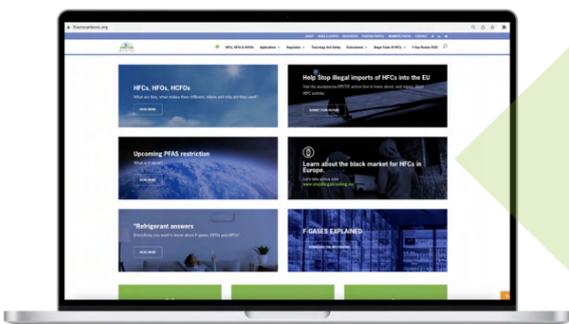
HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT

To combat global warming, the EU is reducing the use of HFCs through a quota system, which criminals are knowingly exploiting. Buying illegally traded refrigerants therefore undermines the EU's efforts to become carbon neutral by 2050.



In numbers

EFCTC estimated in 2019 that illegal imports could represent up to a third of the legal market of HFCs. In 2020, there were 59 seizures of F-gases reported in 12 EU member states. This totals 281 tonnes of refrigerants, with a potential climate impact equivalent to 700,000 tonnes CO₂.



2

INEFFICIENT TO RUN

Illegally traded refrigerants may contain toxic chemicals and other banned substances, which lead to loss of capacity, reduced energy efficiency, higher operational costs and equipment failures. This means that although illegal HFCs may be cheaper at face value, the long-term use of them is uneconomical.



Stay alert

Only buy HFCs from legitimate, reputable F-gas distributors. Avoid buying cheap HFCs online, as they will most likely be from illegal sources. Make sure the cylinder is clearly labelled with details of the manufacturer and has an ADR Transport Symbol and UN number.



4

BREAKING THE LAW

Thanks to tighter enforcement across the EU, criminals are successfully being deterred. According to Europol, F-gases worth more than €10 million were seized by EU cross-border and multi-agency actions in a single week in 2021. Those caught buying or selling counterfeit refrigerants face hefty fines and even imprisonment.



Take action

If you suspect someone is illegally trading HFCs, you can report the case anonymously on the EFCTC Action Line – efctc-actionline.com. Any information submitted is treated as confidential. Suspicious activity will be shared by a third-party investigative agency with enforcement authorities at EU or Member State level, and not with EFCTC members.

Sources

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