

A weekly electronic news service on ozone protection & related issues compiled by: UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, Paris

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1. Industry Urged to Steer Clear of Illegal CFC Refrigerant

Washington, **D.C.**, The Alliance for Responsible Atmospheric Policy today reminded industry and the public to be certain that their chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) refrigerant purchases are legal, and to refuse to buy illegally imported refrigerant. The warning came as reports are beginning to surface that illegal CFC imports may be on the rise as these ozone-depleting refrigerants become more scarce due to their phaseout under U.S. law and international treaty. "Purchasers of the illegal refrigerant are at risk. The government may confiscate any illegally imported refrigerant, even if it has been passed down through the marketplace, and prosecute purchasers who knowingly buy illegal material," stated Dave Stirpe, Executive Director of the Alliance.

"Consumers should also be wary of the refrigerant since some of the imported material has been found to be of poor quality," Stirpe noted.

A government task force consisting of the U.S. Department of Justice, Environmental Protection Agency, Customs Service, and the Internal Revenue Service has been working for several years to uncover illegal imports of CFCs and to investigate claims of illegal importation and unpaid taxes on these chemicals. Since 1995, 103 individuals have been convicted under circumstances involving the sale, import, or purchase of illegally imported CFCs. Penalties have included prison sentences ranging from two months to nearly five years. Fines totaling over \$40 million have been imposed. The civil penalty for violating EPA regulations can be up to \$27,500 per violation.

CFC-12 is a refrigerant used in home and commercial refrigeration, and automobile and large building air conditioners. It has not been produced or imported for use in developed countries since January 1, 1996. However, stockpiles and recycled CFCs can continue to be used to service and maintain existing air conditioning and refrigeration equipment. If you own a 1994 or older vehicle, chances are its mobile air conditioning system requires CFC-12 refrigerant to keep it in operation.

The supply of CFC-12 refrigerant has diminished over the years and, with its increased cost, it may be wise to convert your air conditioning system to another refrigerant when it requires repair. HFC-134a, used in new vehicles and as a CFC-12 replacement, is the "refrigerant of choice" of automobile manufacturers and the air conditioning repair industry.

"Illegal imports make ozone-depleting CFCs more available, reduce the incentive for users to shift to alternatives, and penalize legitimate companies who are complying with U.S. laws," Stirpe stated. In order to report any violations regarding imports or excise taxes that are due on certain stockpiled refrigerant, please call:

EPA: 800-296-1996; IRS: 202-622-4177; or Customs: 800-BE-ALERT.

The Alliance is an industry coalition of domestic users and producers of CFCs and alternatives such as HCFCs and HFCs. Today, the Alliance is a leading industry voice that coordinates industry participation in the development of reasonable international and U.S. government policies regarding ozone protection and climate change.

Contact: Dave Stirpe, 1 703-243-0344/ Alliance for Responsible Atmospheric Policy.

Source: E-Wire, ENS News Service, 05 April 2001, @: http://ens.lycos.com/e-wire/Apr01/05Apr0105.html

2. Pollution Turning Blue Skies to Grey

Scientists have proved that the sky is becoming less blue as its color is leached away by air pollution and destruction of the ozone laver.

Some fear that people in the future will be looking at a pure grey or even dirty yellow sky.

A team of scientists at Koenraad University in Amsterdam made a five-year study into the effects of air pollution and global warming on the world's environment.

They were stunned to see the rate of change in the sky.

Observers around the globe used special colour and light-sensitive digital cameras and a graded colour chart to log even the subtlest shift in shade. From thousands of weekly measurements, the team calculated an average "coefficient of blueness".

They found that it has drastically diminished in five years from 9.3 per cent in 1996 to just 6.9 per cent this year. "Scientists have known for some time the rise in airborne pollutants, coupled with the holes in the ozone layer and global warming, were altering our environment, especially with the recent shifts in weather," said Professor Christoffel Hessenbroek.

"So when we decided to examine the effects of pollution, we expected to see some evidence of deterioration but not to this extent.

"We were surprised to find the high level of environmental damage, causing our skies to rapidly turn grey. Our results show the pounding our planet has taken from man-made pollutants."

Source: The Advertiser, 02 April 0, By Pravina Patel @:

http://www.theadvertiser.com.au/common/story_page/0,4511,1855341%255E912,00.html

3. Distribution Rollout of SP34E Begins with First Shipment to U.S. Market

PHOENIX, AZ, Solpower Corp. worldwide leader in environmental technology, Thursday announced the first shipment of SP34E(TM) to fill various outstanding orders in the distribution rollout of SP34E(TM) in the U.S. market.

EVTC Inc. the company's United States distributor, confirmed receipt of its first shipment of SP34E(TM) and has begun to immediately fill orders.

"We are very pleased with the initial response from our customers and look forward to a great season with SP34E (TM)," stated David Keener, president of EVTC Inc.

Initial orders are being received from both the HVAC/R and automotive markets through EVTC's refrigerant division, Full Circle(TM), and its fleet of on-site service and sales team, Full Circle's Nth Degree(TM). SP34E(TM) is a HFC refrigerant, which is important given the worldwide phase-out of CFCs and HCFCs. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists Solpower's SP34E(TM) as an acceptable refrigerant under the Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) program, established to identify alternatives to ozone-depleting substances.

The rollout of SP34E(TM) into the U.S. market positions the Solpower Corp. to record its best ever financial results and to meeting its earlier forecasted revenue projections.

Full Text @: http://ens.lvcos.com/e-wire/Apr01/06Apr0107.html

Contact: Jim Hirst, 888/289-8866/ Solpower Corp., http://www.solpower.com/

Source: E-Wire, ENS News Service. 06 April 2001

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