

Minutes of Meeting

Document No CO-1423-07

Subject	CO Sub Group	Circulation	All members
Date	26 th June 2007	Circulation Date	
Location	CoGDEM offices Hitchin	Circulation by	Web Site

Attendees

John Saffell - Alphasense
Jason Perrins - Dicon/BRK
Jonathan Gilby - City Tech
Jonathan Kane - Kane Int.
David Riddle - Crowcon/Telegan
James Clark - CryoService
Leigh Greenham - CoGDEM
George McGregor - GMI
Bernard Thomas - Invensys
John Walsh - FireAngel
Ismail Mansoor - Invensys
Arthur Burnley - Alphasense
Steve Lower - Sira Environmental
Richard King - Sira Environmental
Andy Burnett - Kidde
Mike Byrne - Ei Electronics
Adrian Keats - Honeywell SF
Roy Taylor - Testo
Robert Kyle - MSA
Adrian Beasley - Crowcon
Nick Ludlam - FM Global

Apologies

Dave Kerfoot - Baseefa
John Sonley - JMS Consulting
Allan Stamper - Crowcon
Derrick Jepson - TSI
Nigel Lock - Analox
David Woods - General Monitors
Zoe Forman - PR Consultant
Stefan Kukula - Crowcon
Andrew Was - FM Global
John Wilson - MSA
Frank Dean - Ion Science
Colin Mitchell - Ei Electronics
Rob Poulsen - Sensotec 4-Warn
Alan Henderson - GasSensingSolutions
Peter Walsh - HSE
David Frew - AMGas
Ron Sinclair - Baseefa
Richard Whiteside - Land Inst/Ametek

Agenda

- 1) Apologies
- 2) Approval of previous minutes and matters arising
- 3) HSE domestic gas safety review (final outcome and implications for CORGI)
- 4) All Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group (minutes of meeting 18 April 07)
- 5) Gas Industry Safety Group (GISG) and Industrial Liaison Group
- 6) Flue Gas Analysis and CO₂ (including BS8494, and ACS updates)
- 7) CORGI CO Consumer Awareness Alliance (COCAA) and CO Awareness Week
- 8) Standards review (including long term testing of CO alarms in EN50291)
- 9) Black spots – is a performance standard feasible?
- 10) Boats and leisure vehicles (CO dispersion)
- 11) Publicity (Zoe Forman's project)
- 12) AOB (including Proteam/Trading Standards)
- 13) Date of next meeting – Tuesday 23 October 2007

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1 Apologies

The above list of apologies was read out.

2 Review of last Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted (Doc no. CO1422-07). Actions arising were covered during the rest of the agenda, including the long-term testing aspects of EN50291, and the suggestion of low-level alarms to protect at-risk groups. .

3 HSE domestic gas safety review (final outcome and implications for CORGI)

The HSE's major review of the "Domestic Gas Safety Regime" has been concluded, and a summary of the findings was circulated to CoGDEM members prior to it being presented to the HSE commissioners on 9 January.

CoGDEM attended the third HSE stakeholder "workshop", held in London on 8 March 2007, and a forum held on 4 April 2007 at which the HSE announced their final conclusions and actions. The HSE will pass some of its policing and enforcement responsibilities to the "franchisee" of a new five year gas registration scheme, which we assume is most likely to be won by CORGI, though others may apply. The tender documents to allow applicants to bid for the franchise are yet to come out of HSE, so the whole process is behind schedule. CORGI has announced many changes to their structure since this review commenced, and are keen to demonstrate how gas safety and CO awareness is at the top of their agenda, so initiatives such as the COCAA alliance have been accelerated by CORGI's need to take the lead. CORGI is now promoting the SF alarm and selling this by mail-order, although they are keen to offer a choice of alarms if other manufacturers wish to approach them.

4 All Party Parliamentary Gas Safety Group (minutes of meeting 18 April 07)

The group of MPs led by Barry Sheerman has been critical of the Government (HSE, DoH) and the gas supply utilities for not doing enough to publicise the dangers of CO poisoning in the home. CoGDEM attended their update meeting in the House of Commons on 18 April, during which Barry Sheerman continued to give the HSE a hard time. He threatened Lord McKenzie that if he didn't carry through the HSE's agreed actions to meet with his fellow Ministers from other Government departments (such as Health, Education, Local Government, DTI), complaints would be made to the Prime Minister's office! BS was told of the COCAA initiative by the fuel industry, but was sceptical about whether they would fund a major TV advertising campaign, as demanded by the victim support groups (who he suggested should be part of COCAA). Colin Mitchell (Ei Electronics) was able to repeat the message that good lessons could be learnt from studying the successes of the "Fire Kills" campaigns.

The minutes of the meeting are on both the APPGSG and CoGDEM websites. The APPGSG intends to meet again in the autumn.

5 Gas Industry Safety Group (GISG) and Industrial Liaison Group

This group is mainly for the major gas utilities to demonstrate that they can come together to discuss common safety issues, but they tend to just discuss rather than take actions. Their next meeting is on 29 June 2007 and will be attended by Jonathan Kane. Leigh Greenham wondered whether we get value from our £600 per annum membership of GISG, as CoGDEM attends its own right all of the CO related events that GISG gets invited to, and we now have a higher profile on the subject than they have. Jonathan Kane will consider this during the meeting.

CoGDEM has been represented by Eddie Quigley at the Industrial Liaison Group (ILG) meetings, whose aim is to get CO knowledge and the use of Flue Gas Analysers into the curriculum of the ACS training that gas installers have to undertake. This has been successful, with the announcement on 12 June 2007 that both issues are now to be included in the ACS scheme. The press release has already been circulated to relevant CoGDEM members.

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6 Flue Gas Analysis and CO₂ (including BS8494, and ACS updates)

CORGI is heavily promoting the use of Flue Gas Analysers by its members, as part of the general safety message about carbon monoxide poisoning. Its own field inspectors are now equipped with units. As mentioned above, the ACS committee has agreed to include a module to train installers in the use of FGAs, and this is to be called CPA1 (Combustion Performance Analysis).

FGA manufacturers have agreed to co-fund the creation and development of the documents used by GSE/30/-/21 for Part 5 of BS7967, covering non-domestic uses of FGAs. Such applications include commercial kitchens, where new generation FGAs with direct reading CO₂ sensors will be appropriate. Gordon Pool of Downstream Gas has been retained to get the ball rolling.

Downstream Gas has also proposed another work item, this being the creation of a guide to BS7967 which manufacturers of Flue Gas Analysers could include with new units. Manufacturers are to decide whether to support this work.

CoGDEM has been the prime mover on the new British Standard BS 8494 (performance of handheld CO₂ instruments). This has now been completed; all comments have been compiled and included, so the final standard will be published by BSI during the summer.

Jonathan Kane re-iterated his suggestion that BSi be encouraged to undertake some launch activities now that Part 4 of BS7967 is being published alongside Parts 1-3, which were not well publicised by them.

7 CORGI CO Consumer Awareness Alliance (COCAA) and CO Awareness Week

The fuel industry (piped gas, bottled gas, oil, coal and solid fuels) has been criticised for not doing enough to publicise the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning from the combustion of its fuels. It had been hoped that the ERA (Energy Retailers Association) would take the lead, but this has not occurred.

CORGI has grabbed the initiative by inviting all of the fuel companies to join the Carbon Monoxide Consumer Awareness Alliance, and after their first meeting, CoGDEM was invited to join so that our knowledge of CO alarms could be added to the Alliance. Zoe Forman and Leigh Greenham have attended subsequent meetings and were asked to be on the Steering Group, which has met recently to co-ordinate activities, especially CO Awareness week from 15 to 19 October 2007.

The Alliance has generated an enthusiastic response from all of its members, who are keen to step up their individual campaigns on CO. A common logo is to be used by all, and all CoGDEM members are encouraged to use it wherever CO is mentioned (on instruments, packaging, manuals, sales literature, websites, exhibition stands, letterheads etc). A "toolkit" (CD-ROM in an embossed metal box) was distributed to all members, and extra copies are available.

Seven key messages have been created, covering appliance servicing, use of CO alarms, symptoms of poisoning etc, and key message 3 is:

3. Fit an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm

Carbon Monoxide alarms need to meet European safety standards and must be audible. Fit them in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions.

We do not recommend the use of a 'Black Spot' detector – these are often inaccurate and will not alert you if you are overcome by Carbon Monoxide fumes or asleep.

If you are concerned about the threat of Carbon Monoxide poisoning whilst on holiday in the UK or abroad, you may wish to take a battery-operated Carbon Monoxide alarm with you.



The COCAA alliance has CO-Gas Safety and CO-Awareness as members, although not on the Steering Group, and CoGDEM agreed to ensure that we act as a conduit to keep them in the loop. This is not always easy, with

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an example being the planned activities for CO Awareness week, where Lynn Griffiths is actively trying to sort out venues and events in London, North England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland, so that each day of the week focuses on a different location, but she has not been checking whether this fits in with other organisations that want to be involved. It is expected that individual CoGDEM member companies will want to join in some of these activities. For example, the trade launch of the COCAA initiative will take place at CORGI's Installer live exhibition in Coventry in September 2007, so manufacturers will be approached about promoting their products there. CoGDEM has agreed to co-ordinate a CO Forum in one of the exhibition's theatres at 2pm on Thursday 20 September.

8 Standards Review (including long term testing of CO alarms in EN50291)

The BSi committee that deals with gas detectors is GEL/31/19, chaired by John Sonley, and CoGDEM is well represented, with Jonathan Gilby, Jason Perrins, Leigh Greenham and Peter Walsh (representing HSE) as members. TC216 is the European CENELEC "parent" group to which GEL/31/19 reports, and there was a TC216 meeting in London on 22 Feb 2007, with Jason Perrins as the leader of the UK delegation. Peter Walsh and John Sonley were also there.

Jason gave his report from this TC216 meeting, and stated his disappointment that the UK delegation was outvoted about the inclusion of long-term testing within the performance standard for domestic CO alarms, so the long-term testing protocol that CoGDEM proposed will not be made mandatory within EN 50291-1. However, it was suggested that this protocol could still be used by CoGDEM members, as it represents best practice.

Jason also reported that the suggestion of modifying the standard to allow for especially sensitive alarms to be set for at-risk groups was also not well received. Currently, manufacturers cannot introduce these without falling outside of the EN50291 requirements. At this CoGDEM meeting, it was again suggested that manufacturers could come up with ways to implement pre-alarm "warnings" or "alerts" for low level monitoring that do not conflict with the requirements of EN50291.

At the SC31-9 CENELEC meeting on 21 February 2007 (covering the more industrial applications of gas detection), the German delegation stated that it had been working on the concept of extending SIL ratings for all safety equipment based on categorising the application. There was general agreement that domestic alarms were likely to fall into the lowest risk category (SIL level < 1) and that this was unlikely to be a significant burden to the manufacturers.

On the domestic flammable gas detector side, the Germans continue to work on the harmonisation of EN 50194-1 (officially awaiting comments) but EN 50194-2, a new standard for domestic flammable gas detectors that have removable sensors or are used in recreational vehicles has now been published.

9 Black spots – is a performance standard feasible?

Following the BBC Panorama programme in April 2007, in which they followed-up the Corfu incident, black spot indicators have been a major talking point, due to the programme's reporter holding up a black spot indicator at the end of the programme, and due to the programme's producers claiming that they had sought guidance from the HSE. Formal communications to the BBC have complained that the guidance that was contained within the programme was wrong, as it did not mention electronic audible alarms, or the weaknesses of black spots. The HSE is waiting for a response from the BBC as to why they were misquoted.

Internally, HSE are asking why there isn't a standard to cover black spots, and Peter Walsh was asked to find out whether CoGDEM felt that they could support (and perhaps generate) a relevant standard. CoGDEM's position is that we only recommend the use of audible alarms, and we do not recommend the use of black spots. However, several CoGDEM members who manufacture and market audible alarms also market black spots (or similar colour change patches) so it means that CoGDEM is seen to have a somewhat ambiguous stance on the issue. For example, FireAngel has just launched a travellers' safety pack containing some first-aid materials and a CO black spot indicator.

A lively discussion allowed all of the arguments for and against the patches to be aired once more, but there was little enthusiasm for CoGDEM to support the creation of a standard, although it was felt that CoGDEM could arrange for a set of key warnings and guidance about the use of patches to be created and distributed to all manufacturers or suppliers. It was also felt that BSi might not back the creation of a standard, as the demand would be so low that it might not pay for itself. It was also felt that as the retail price of electronic CO alarms

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continues to fall, there will be a corresponding decrease in the demand for patches. The UK seems to be the main outlet for patches. Peter Walsh is to be informed of our views, as he could not be present today.

10 Boats and leisure vehicles (CO dispersion)

There is no progress to report on the proposed project to test CO dispersion in boats and leisure vehicles. Peter Walsh has confirmed that he has not heard back from the Boat Safety Scheme, possibly due to their priorities being elsewhere while the UK suffers flooding of its waterways.

11 Publicity (Zoe Forman's project)

Zoe Forman could not attend today's meeting, as CORGI was presenting its CO report and statistics in London, at which Zoe represented CoGDEM. Leigh Greenham gave an overview of the CO Publicity Group's activities. Zoe is funded by a small group of alarm manufacturers (and one FGA manufacturer) and this group has separate meetings every couple of months to review progress and plan new initiatives (next meeting 11 July).

The group has been very active, what with participation in the activities listed above, such as the HSE review, the MPs' meeting, the CORGI COCAA initiative, the London medical conference and various landlord presentations such as the one in Warrington in March. The new leaflet has been sent out in bulk to many organisations, and pop-up display stands are to be produced for use at regional events and presentations.

The demand for electronic alarms is still high, and manufacturers are preparing for a busy summer as people buy devices before they travel abroad. The CO Awareness week will require much pre-planning, as will our activities at Installer Live.

Our relationships with Stephanie Trotter (CO-Gas Safety), Lynn Griffiths (CO Awareness) and Stacey Rogers (Dominic Rogers Trust) remain cordial, but this demands a level of diplomacy and tact.

12 AOB

12.1 Proteam/Trading Standards

In February 2007, we spotted a Times newspaper readers' offer for a mains-powered CO alarm supplied with a European adaptor plug and marketed as a holiday alarm. This was subsequently discovered in Makro, being sold wholesale at less than £10. A member purchased a couple of alarms, both of which were faulty when plugged in. Subsequent tests showed that they would not respond to CO, but did respond to methane and butane, as the semiconductor sensor was actually a flammable gas sensor. Makro recalled the device, but a telephone call to the importer (Proteam) unearthed that they were incorrectly applying the British Standard Kitemark and claiming compliance to EN50291. The Proteam alarm was designed and built in China.

When the units started appearing in retail outlets such as Robert Dyas, CoGDEM provided members' test data to Trading Standards, who took the relevant action and now a full recall and safety warnings have been issued. This has shown that several of the big retail outlets did not insist on seeing third party certificates to back up manufacturers' claims of compliance with standards; this is something that CoGDEM members should push for.

12.2 Battery failures – Transco initiative?

The helpline took a call from a Transco representative in Scotland, concerned that householders are dialling the Gas Emergency Service number when their CO alarms go into low-battery. Transco is obliged to make a call-out visit, but would like to know if questions could be asked by the telephone operator to distinguish low-battery alarms from real gas alarms. CoGDEM's advice when people call with a similar question is that if the alarm sound is only a slow bleep, with no red flashing light, then it is probably a low-battery condition, especially if the alarm is some years old. We advise people to check with the manufacturer, and we can give out the relevant technical helpline number when we are told the manufacturer's name. We agreed to help Transco word some similar questions, and they will e-mail us with their first suggestions.

13 Date of next Meeting Tuesday 23 October 2007, 10:00am, Hitchin.