

Minutes of Meeting

Document No CO-1441-13

Subject	CO Sub Group	Circulation	All members
Date	4 th June 2013	Circulation Date	22 nd July 2013
Location	CoGDEM offices Hitchin	Circulation by	Website & email

Attendees

John Saffell - Alphasense
Leigh Greenham - CoGDEM
Jonathan Gilby - City Technology
Philip Wild - Duomo
Bernard Thomas - Kidde Safety
Paul Basham - Crowcon
Louise Early - Crowcon
Clive Tester - Sira
Jonathan Kane - Kane International
Gary Sumption - Shawcity
Colin Mitchell - Ei Electronics
Neil Perrell - Aico
Michael Wright - Aico
Tony Bleakley - Anton
Peter Walsh - HSL/HSE
Mike Hemingway - HSL/HSE
Mike Murley - Testo
Simon James - Air Liquide
James Woodward - Air Liquide
Kevin Milesen - GES
Ian Ballinger - Sprue Safety
Tom Gurd - City Technology
Jason Perrins - FireBlitz
Brendan Simpson - FireBlitz

Apologies

Mike Byrne - Ei Electronics
Andy Burnett - Kidde Safety
Peter Philpott - TPI
Eddie Quigley - QMI
James Whale - Testo
Richard King - Honeywell Analytics
Arthur Burnley - Alphasense
John Sonley - JMS Consultants
Jeff Regan - JMS Consultants
Brett Skelton - Honeywell Analytics
Zoe Forman - Mandeville Marketing
Tony Banfield - EXL/31/1 etc Chairman
Graham McKay - BSI Global
Grant Bleakley - Anton
John Walsh - Sprue Safety

Agenda

- 1) Apologies and member introductions
- 2) Approval of previous minutes and matters arising
- 3) Lobbying activities (inc. All Party Group, HHIC, CCC, GAD, DECC)
- 4) CO-Be Alarmed campaign and other publicity (Zoe Forman)
- 5) CO alarms standards review (inc. EN 50291-1 & -2, EN 50292 update, combined smoke/CO alarms, market surveillance testing)
- 6) Flue Gas Analysis (inc. compliance with standards, new boiler testing, new European user standard TS 50612, CO₂ effect on O₂ sensors)
- 7) CFOA 'Blue Watch' Fire & Rescue Service initiative
- 8) Non-compliant CO alarms update, inc. Black Spots
- 9) AOB (including updates from HSE, helpline)
- 10) Date of next meeting – Tues 15 Oct 2013

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1 Apologies and member introductions

The above list of apologies was read out. Members introduced themselves, including new members Air Liquide.

2 Approval of previous minutes and matters arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting (12th Feb 2013, CO1440-13) were read and accepted. Matters arising were covered during the rest of the agenda (including the request for FGA maintenance/calibration info).

3 Lobbying (inc. All Party Group, HHIC, CCC, GAD & DECC)

All Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG):

As part of the APPCOG, CoGDEM is a co-sponsor of the Carbon Monoxide All Fuels Action Forum, which aims to coordinate industry activities related to domestic CO incidents and awareness, but across all fuels, not just gas.

This is a very active group with current issues such as:-

- CO risks on holiday (inc camping and boats)
- Submissions to Energy Bill, amendments to include mention of CO
- HSE ACoP consultation
- Smart Meter and Green Deal input
- Helpline, setting up an all-fuels out-of hours advice service
- Statistical recording of all incidents (NB, Louise Early mentioned the inclusion of workplace CO incidents)
- Social housing and private rented sector, landlords and mortgage/insurance company publicity

John Arnold, Manager of APPCOG was given an 'achievement' award at a recent industry event. David Kidney, the Chairman of the Forum Steering Group and the victims' 'SAVi' group has unexpectedly stepped down, it now appears this was after an unsatisfactory 'SAVi' meeting.

CoGDEM will undoubtedly be asked to continue its funding of the Forum for the next 12-month period from September. The APPCOG is run by Policy Connect, who will be involved in the debate on parliamentary lobbying during the second half of 2013.

HHIC:

CoGDEM continues to work closely with HHIC (the gas heating appliance manufacturers' trade association). They are taking the lead in creating a Technical Bulletin to cover the move to compulsory checking for CO in the flues of domestic gas boilers at point of installation and commissioning from April 2014. Our FGA members have been asked to check the text and a flowchart to aid the engineer in taking a combustion measurement. A revised 'Benchmark' checklist has also been prepared, with spaces for the commissioning engineer to enter CO and CO/CO₂ ratio readings from their FGA. Members have proposed a co-funded advertising campaign in trade magazines in the months leading up to April 2014.

GAD (Gas Appliance Directive)

Jonathan Kane continues his mission to get more mention of carbon monoxide in the relevant section of the GAD, which may only be possible in the guidance notes which accompany the Directive.

Camping and Caravanning Club (CCC)

LG and ZF asked for and subsequently attended a meeting at CCC's HQ, also attended by Dr Andy Shaw of Liverpool John Moores University. Many documents were displayed showing the relevant tests and specifications proving that the temporary use of CO alarms inside tents was not going to lead to the kind of problems that CCC had been publicising to its members and elsewhere. This was a successful meeting, and their old guidance is now in the process of being changed to include a positive mention of CO alarms when camping.

Victims' charities

LG explained that he had been criticised by CO-Gas Safety for answering one of their missives without consulting individual CoGDEM member companies, but he explained that this is often part of his CoGDEM role, members around the table agreed. Jonathan Kane, also a Director of CO-Gas Safety, explained the charity's ongoing demands for a levy to fund publicity, which led to a discussion of whether this was realistic. The difference between the smoke alarms' COI funding was felt to be relevant. LG is also in ongoing correspondence with Molly Maher who runs Consumer Safety International, as she seems to be advised by people who favour CO alarm testing kits.

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4 CO-Be Alarmed campaign and other publicity

Zoe Forman couldn't be present today as she was attending an APPCOG event, but she had sent some notes to update everyone on some publicity initiatives she has kicked off.

The CoGDEM CO mini website will be linked to a new site www.carbonmonoxidenewsuk.wordpress.com which will contain relevant newsfeeds and video clips with direct links to social media.

Gas Safety Week has become an annual event run by Gas Safe Register, and will run this year from 16-22 Sept. CoGDEM has pledged its support online.

This year's CO-Be Alarmed campaign, will start at the end of October, more details will emerge during the summer months. This will be the 6th year of the campaign funded by the gas retail companies under their trade association Energy UK.

Zoe is also involved with the Dominic Rodgers Trust campervan project, and she will help drive the CO-liveried vehicle to festivals, exhibitions and outdoor shows throughout the year.

Zoe hopes to rework the CoGDEM CO leaflet and update our website quite soon.

Other publicity items discussed included the Hackney Homes report, where the authors' clumsily written treatment of the CO alarms involved in over 100 genuine CO incidents has been deliberately misinterpreted by those seeking to claim that CO alarms are unreliable. LG is working with Public Health England (one of the co-authors) to publish a clarification.

There has also been some early publicity from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch of the Dept for Transport, mentioning stand-alone CO alarm usage on board recreational boats. They issued a safety bulletin after the double fatality in the Lake District at Easter, which itself was followed by two more near-miss incidents. The Boat Safety Scheme keeps us close to these issues.

5 CO alarms Standards review (including EN 50291-1 & -2, EN 50292 update, combined smoke/CO alarms, market surveillance testing)

We still await the circulation of the early draft revision of **EN 50291-1**, put together by the Working Group convened by the Irish (WG9). The additions to -1 aim to make the standard more consistent with the domestic smoke alarm standard, including end-of-unit-life tests, long-life battery capacity tests etc.

With **EN 50291-2** published to cover the use of CO alarms in caravans, motorhomes and boats, BSI has been able to conduct testing to the new clauses since the summer of 2012, so CO alarm products are now being sold which are Kitemarked to this standard. Some slight confusion has existed in the market place between the applicability of -1 and -2, and manufacturers may need to make it clearer which part of the standard they have used, or show compliance to both parts where applicable.

We also discussed two models of **combined smoke/CO alarms** which CoGDEM members are manufacturing, both using different techniques to demonstrate compliance with relevant European standards. Concerns were raised by some members that the accompanying instructions and packaging do not clarify the kitchen-mounting applications, where it is usually not correct to mount a smoke alarm, but could be the correct location for the CO alarm. The relevant manufacturers would investigate this and we hope for a consistent approach to this issue.

The standard for guidance on the use of CO alarms, **EN 50292** has again been further redrafted by Peter Walsh after receipt of all the European comments, including some late submissions from Spain. It is hoped that the final draft will be able to be formally circulated soon, prior to it being voted on by the relevant committee(s).

A proposal from Brussels to coordinate some pan-European **market surveillance of CO alarms** has been welcomed by CoGDEM. We would like to see such testing performed by appropriately accredited test laboratories, as this has not always been the case in Europe. It was felt that this would help in the ongoing lobbying to get EN 50291 made a mandatory requirement for all CO alarms on sale in Europe, as the testing would show up the deficiencies of the non-compliant products.

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6 Flue Gas Analysis (inc. compliance with standards, new boiler testing, new European user standard TS 50612, CO₂ effect on O₂ sensors)

Standards

LG thanked relevant companies for submitting information on their products' compliance with EN 50379, the standard that governs the performance of Flue Gas Analysers. Some companies use accredited test labs to conduct such testing, others do some of the tests themselves.

Compulsory Combustion Testing

As mentioned above with reference to HHIC, the move to a mandatory use of FGAs to commission new gas-fired condensing boilers is welcomed, and CoGDDEM members will discuss an advertising campaign to publicise this. The oil-fired boiler manufacturers are looking increasingly likely to follow suit, also proposing to set a maximum CO concentration in the flue of a new appliance.

TS 50612, a new European version of BS 7967

Although this will not be a full EN standard, a Technical Standard is a useful way of getting a consistent European approach to the use of Flue Gas Analysers, without relevant national standards being deemed obsolete (such as BS 7967 which continues to be updated). A draft of TS 50612 had been circulated to relevant members in April, and a CENELEC-formalised version is now available, this has a commenting period until September.

CO₂ effect on O₂ sensors

It has recently come to light via Germany that a reading discrepancy may be seen in the flue oxygen readings depending on whether the FGA uses a direct-reading oxygen sensor (and hence calculates CO₂) or uses a direct reading CO₂ sensor and hence calculates the oxygen content of the flue gases. The electrochemical oxygen sensor manufacturers are looking into a reported scenario whereby a slightly enhanced O₂ reading can be given under certain conditions of high CO₂. Although this can be corrected when the oxygen sensor is new, it is possible that the non-linearity is not consistent with older sensors, suggesting that an FGA might have a changing accuracy as the sensor ages. Manufacturers were urged to discuss this with their sensor suppliers, and then discuss at a future FGA sub-meeting.

Calibration

After our previous meeting, LG had floated the idea of a 'calibration due' sticker that could be attached to FGAs, so that field inspectors could instantly identify whether a heating engineer was using a calibrated instrument. Most instruments already have built-in methods to identify this, but there is no consistent approach. This needs further discussion.

Theft database

Kevin Milesen had suggested CoGDDEM hosting a stolen-FGA database for public access, where only CoGDDEM members could enter serial number details of instruments that had been reported stolen. Some members already have a way of recording details of their own units, so much of the data may already be available. To be discussed at a separate FGA meeting.

Follow-up meeting suggestion

A suggestion was made to host a separate FGA meeting over the summer months, as many of the relevant items discussed today could not be debated in length due to the limited time available. **Action: LG to organise**

7 CFOA 'Blue Watch' Fire & Rescue Service initiative

The Blue Watch scheme was officially launched yesterday (3rd June). This new initiative by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) administered by Capita will allow relevant tradesmen to receive basic fire safety training but to include an awareness of CO, with CO alarm fitting as an option. It is a commercial scheme, and the first target is for landlords to sign up for a 'safer rented homes' category. CFOA now has a webshop for related products, and despite CoGDDEM's recommendations, they have opted for a single CFOA-branded CO alarm. They will also allow non-CFOA-branded products to be featured in the webshop, and LG hopes that manufacturers will keep their options open by supporting this idea. CoGDDEM's only input has been to facilitate contact between CFOA/Capita and relevant CoGDDEM members, and to advise them on compliance with product standards.

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8 Non-compliant CO alarms update, inc. Black Spots

LG has recently had contact with some eBay suppliers of CO alarms (Procure Direct and Global Gadgets) when a recognised alarm with a blue LCD caused some calls to the CoGDEM helpline. After explanation, the importer behaved properly, ceasing the supply. One Trading Standards office became interested (Londonderry).

Some correspondence between CoGDEM and PHAM News was shown to members, after LG spotted a letter where a single black spot CO indicator was being offered free to people who were concerned about CO risks in their homes. The editor supported our position and gave CoGDEM the ability to respond in the subsequent issue.

9 AOB (including updates from HSE, helpline)

a) HSE

Peter Walsh updated members of the HSE's concerns about CO production when woodchips or pellets are stored in unventilated confined spaces. LG had circulated the HSE warning notice to all CoGDEM members in November, but the update is that HSE has not found evidence of a significant risk. Peter also mentioned that indoor go-kart arenas remain under the spotlight after some CO incidents caused by poor ventilation of the uncatalysed exhaust systems used by many karts. HSE inspectors have been advised of the risk.

b) GISG

CoGDEM is a member of the Gas Industry Safety Group, and attends their regular meetings. GISG and ENA (Energy Networks Association) will organise an 'industry-focused' Gas Safety Week, expected to start on 21st October 2013, this will not have a consumer focus.

c) IGEN CO Conference

IGEM (Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers) was hosting its first ever CO conference in Derby on 11th July, and CoGDEM had been given a 15-minute slot to make a presentation to the expected 150-strong audience. LG would put together some slides on recent developments with CO detectors of various types (domestic CO alarms, FGAs, PPE). This would also cover the development of relevant standards, which may have been unknown to most of the audience. CoGDEM member companies had generously donated a quantity of alarms so that delegates could be given an alarm at the end of the day. Some members would also be exhibiting their products on the day.

d) GASG

The previous Gas Analysis and Sensing Group colloquia concerned gas sensing in healthcare, held at Cranfield University in March, with one presentation from a CoGDEM member (Ei Electronics) on exposure to low concentrations of CO. The next colloquia will be titled 'Measurement Challenges in Gas Detection', held at NPL on 18th July.

e) CoGDEM's CO Helpline

LG reported on some recent unusual calls, including several from the same pregnant lady worried that her LCD CO alarms (from more than one manufacturer) were showing concentrations of up to 20ppm CO in her home. After firstly suggesting that she must use ventilation when using her gas cooker (which she hadn't realised), subsequent investigation revealed that her ground-floor flat was around 6 metres from queuing traffic at one of Oxford's busiest road junctions.

f) Hackney Homes report

We had heard about the successful project to equip many council homes or social housing homes in Hackney with CO alarms, and that within weeks Hackney Homes had been responding to over 100 callouts caused in many cases by the demands placed on gas cookers during ethnic cooking. It was disappointing to read a PHE (Public Health England, ex-HPA) report which clumsily described one quarter of the CO alarms that had identified these incidents as being faulty. The authors classed the alarm as faulty if the investigating engineer had changed the alarm as a matter of course after the incident, or if the CO alarm had depleted its battery after being in alarm for up to two days prior to the investigator's arrival. LG is intending to get the authors to publish a clarification in the same journal which published the original report.

There was also mention of another report doing the rounds – a legal company paid by Detectagas to state that as smoking in the workplace was effectively banned, any CO alarm company that allowed its products to be tested by cigarette smoke or joss sticks was effectively encouraging local authorities/heating engineers to break the law.

10 Date of next meeting – Tues 15 Oct 2013