

Minutes of Meeting

Document No CO-1442-13

Subject	CO Sub Group	Circulation	All members
Date	15 th October 2013	Circulation Date	1 st Nov 2013
Location	CoGDEM offices Hitchin	Circulation by	Website & email

Attendees

Leigh Greenham - CoGDEM
Mike Byrne - Ei Electronics - Chairman
Peter Philpott - TPI
Louise Early - Crowcon
Graham McKay - BSI Global
Clive Tester - Sira
Tony Banfield - EXL/31/1 & TC216 Chairman
Jonathan Kane - Kane International
Tom Gurd – City Technology
Colin Mitchell - Ei Electronics
Gavin Boorman - GfG
Damian Cairns - Anton
Kevin Honner - Draeger
Mike Hemingway - HSL/HSE
Kevin Mileson - GES
Ian Ballinger - Sprue Safety
Jason Perrins - FireBlitz
Michael Wright - Aico
Bernard Thomas - Kidde Safety
Gary Sumption - Shawcity
Zoe Forman - Mandeville Marketing

Apologies

Mike Murley - Testo
Patrick Shannon - SST Sensing
John Walsh - Sprue Safety
Philip Wild - Duomo
Peter Walsh - HSL/HSE
Tony Bleakley - Anton
Neil Perdell - Aico
Hans Hubner - GfG
Andy Avenell - Crowcon
John Sonley - JMS Consultants
Jeff Regan - JMS Consultants
Adrian Keats - Honeywell Analytics
Andy Burnett - Kidde Safety
Richard King - Honeywell Analytics
Jonathan Gilby - City Technology
Arthur Burnley - Alphasense

Agenda

- 1) Apologies and member introductions
- 2) Approval of previous minutes and matters arising
- 3) Lobbying activities (inc. All Party Group, HHIC, CCC)
- 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, consistent operation)
- 6) Flue Gas Analysis (inc. review of recent meeting, covering standards, new boiler testing & CoGDEM adverts, CO₂ effect on O₂ sensors, calibration consistency)
- 7) CoGDEM-sponsored CO alarm testing proposal, including gas canister testing
- 8) Non-compliant CO alarms update, inc. Black Spots
- 9) AOB (including updates from HSE, victims charities, CoGDEM helpline)
- 10) Dates of 2014 meetings – Tues 11 Feb 2014, Tues 10 June 2014, Tues 14 Oct 2014

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1 Apologies and member introductions

The above list of apologies was read out, then attending members introduced themselves around the table

2 Approval of previous minutes and matters arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting (4th June 2013, CO1441-13) were read and accepted. Matters arising were covered during the rest of the agenda, including the additional FGA meeting that had been held in September, see item 6 below.

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

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. For the year Sep 13 to Aug 14, a total of £5k funding will be provided by 8 CoGDEM members, with Anton joining the previous sponsors (City Tech, Ei Electronics, FireBlitz, Honeywell, Kane, Kidde and Sprue).

A Steering Group meeting was held on 14th October, attended by LG, who reported that a new Chairman (Steve Miller of CIEH) had been appointed following the resignation of the previous Chairman (David Kidney). The first part of the meeting dealt with a request from the victims' SAVi+ sub group that the minutes of the previous meeting be changed to remove a comment made by Barry Sheerman MP about unacceptable language being used by one of the victims' groups, as it was this which had led to the Chairman's resignation. John Arnold has also left the group, and his successor will be joining soon (ex-Oxfam).

Items discussed by the steering group include the new CO helpline set up by the Building & Engineering Services Association (B&ES, formally known as HVCA), the funding of Roland Wessling's research project at Cranfield University (and other items related to holiday protection), the Group's code of governance, the possible creation of a 'science and technology' sub group, and the possibility of a national awareness campaign. Although seemingly unlikely to come to anything, the All Party Group has engaged with the Cabinet Office about free-to-air TV advertising with creation costs met by the big six energy retailers. Apparently the 'fillers team' at the Cabinet Office are looking into a CO public health message that could be inserted between programmes on publicly funded TV stations.

HHIC:

HHIC (the gas heating appliance manufacturers' trade association) has created a Technical Bulletin (TB143) 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 checked and amended the text and flowchart which has now been published in Registered Gas Engineer magazine. LG has received tentative agreement from HHIC to co-fund an advertising campaign in trade magazines in the months leading up to April 2014, with simple wording to be agreed between HHIC and CoGDEM.

Action: LG to ensure advert campaign progresses

Camping and Caravanning Club (CCC)

Following CoGDEM's intervention, the CCC has now modified its guidance on CO, and its publications and videos include a positive mention of CO alarms when camping.

Victims' charities

CO-Gas Safety is organising the next Schools' poster competition, and may well approach us for CO alarm donations as prizes.

LG is in ongoing correspondence with Molly Maher who runs Consumer Safety International, over the recent CSI/ANEC publicity about a WHO report on European CO incidents. Their headline stated that more Europeans die from CO than alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS or skin cancer. By studying the WHO report in detail it can be seen that the headlines are plainly wrong (Russia and Belarus are not in Europe, yet their figures skew the report dramatically, one of several serious errors). At least the report takes a positive stance about the use of domestic CO alarms.

CO-Awareness (Lynn Griffiths) has approached CoGDEM for funding for this year's CO-Awareness Week, although it would appear that this will only be a single day of activities this year, the Monday 18th November event in Westminster. CoGDEM members can contact Lynn directly if they wish to help financially.

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Gas Appliance Directive (GAD)

Although the GAD itself will not mention CO alarms or flue gas analysers, the explanatory guidance notes that accompany the GAD could do. Graham McKay from BSI (with assistance from Gordon Anderson) has drafted amendments to the official GAD guidance sheets, and these will be presented and discussed at a GAD Working Group meeting in Brussels in November to be attended by GM.

4 CO-Be Alarmed campaign and other publicity

Zoe Forman gave a presentation which can be sent to members on request. She highlighted the media coverage that this year's CO-Be Alarmed campaign achieved, which was considerably better than the previous year, resulting in a spike of calls to the CoGDEM helpline for a few days after the various interviews went to air on TV and radio. There was also significant coverage in printed media and via social networks.

As well as the media releases and interviews, the campaign team will be holding a Parliamentary drop-in session for MPs on 27th Nov, some Scottish and NI MPs will be invited to attend, and a similar event is being planned for Cardiff as well.

Zoe has written an article for 'Plumbheat' magazine focussing on the Building Regulations ambiguity following the new requirements for CO alarms in Scotland. A Daily Mail health feature is imminent, this has had CoGDEM input.

Zoe attended a Flues-in-Voids publicity meeting at which ways of getting the message across to a wider audience were discussed. A technical review and update on the FiV situation will be held at HHIC on 19 November, to be attended by LG.

Gas Safety Week ran this year from 16-22 Sept. CoGDEM pledged its support online and has been told that the week was very successful, with 150 million 'opportunities' for the UK public to have seen gas safety messages, including CO information.

A CO conference was held in Poland on 8/9 October, Zoe had sent a presentation and data for them to use, as they hope to mirror the UK's approach to awareness raising.

Zoe hopes to rework the CoGDEM CO leaflet soon, she has updated the CO section of the CoGDEM website and encourages members to visit this and give her feedback. If it is liked, Zoe could update the rest of the website to adopt the same style.

Finally, Zoe mentioned three CO-related items from her non-work life, the narrow boat she hired this summer was well equipped with a CO alarm and suitable warnings, when she had her chimney lined she was offered a CO alarm, and the first aid training she received as a Police Special Constable included CO poisoning.

Other publicity items discussed today 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 has now been promised that Public Health England (one of the co-authors) will publish a clarification, together with his letter pointing out the area that was being misinterpreted.

Also the Boat Safety Scheme will be reprinting the CO leaflet that was produced in conjunction with CoGDEM and part-funded by the CO alarm manufacturers. Each new print run is now funded by new sponsors (e.g. boat insurers) and if individual CoGDEM member companies wish to sponsor a new print run they can contact Graham Watts directly (£1500 for 15,000 leaflets).

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

Mike Byrne updated the meeting, 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), and worked on primarily by Ciaran Costelloe. 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, wireless links etc. MB hopes we will see this draft before the end of the calendar year. It is unlikely to be published as an updated standard before 2015/16 at the earliest.

There remains some slight confusion in the market place between the applicability of -1 and -2, for example on CO victims' group's leaflet says only -1 compliant alarms can be used in homes, whereas of course -2 alarms can be used in homes as well as in recreational vehicles. Manufacturers may need to make it clearer which part of the standard they have used, or show compliance to both parts where applicable and perhaps use text to explain where the alarms can be used.

At the previous CoGDEM meeting we had discussed two models of **combined smoke/CO alarms** which CoGDEM members are manufacturing, one manufacturer updated today's meeting to state that the next issue of packaging would clarify the mounting recommendations with regard to use in domestic kitchens. It is hoped that the two relevant CENELEC groups TC216 (gas detectors) and TC72 (smoke detectors) will work together to investigate the feasibility of a new EN standard to cover such combined alarms. CoGDEM members remain cautious about how these products are marketed, they may be perfect for small 'all-in-one' areas such as bedsits, caravans and boats, but less suitable for the majority of domestic applications. British Gas has mentioned its reservations to LG, they are concerned that householders may take the wrong actions if the alarm does not audibly distinguish smoke from CO activations.

The revised standard for guidance on the use of CO alarms, **EN 50292**, is still expected soon.

At the previous CoGDEM meeting we discussed a proposal from Brussels to coordinate some pan-European **market surveillance of CO alarms**, and a meeting of eight interested countries took place under the 'Prosafe' banner in Brussels on 9th July. Despite CoGDEM's request to BSI, the UK was not represented at the meeting, but we were told that two UK test labs were bidding against the tender for the work. It is hoped that the results from this project should help in the ongoing lobbying to get EN 50291 made a mandatory requirement for all CO alarms on sale in Europe, as the testing is very likely to show up the deficiencies of the non-compliant products. Post meeting note: we now understand BSI has been awarded the 'Prosafe' testing contract, but this is not likely to be made public until the end of the testing.

LG also mentioned that National Grid had made a comment in a recent APPCOG helpline meeting that it is not helpful that CO alarm manufacturers use completely inconsistent operational techniques in their products, making fault or low-battery diagnosing by phone very difficult. This point was also reinforced by BG, who gave the example of one CO alarm which changes to an audio blip after the full alarm has been sounded for some time, so that the battery does not get exhausted. A caller reporting an occasional blip from their CO alarm will not usually get an emergency response, but perhaps in some cases there may be (or have been) a genuine CO presence. Post-meeting note: the planned revisions to EN 50291-1 may address this consistency issue.

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

A separate meeting of FGA manufacturers and suppliers was held in September, with meeting notes supplied to attendees, so many of the topics were only briefly reviewed today and recorded in these minutes.

Standards

No changes to the key performance standard EN 50379 were discussed, the new European Technical Specification TS 50612 for the use of FGAs will have the received comments included this month and will be ready for publication soon. The Working Group on BS7967 will be meeting in December.

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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 agreed on the need for a co-funded advertising campaign with HHIC to publicise this. Members will be able to suggest suitable wording for the advert. The oil-fired boiler manufacturers will be following suit, setting a lower maximum CO concentration in the flue of a new oil-fired boiler than for the relevant gas-fired version.

CO₂ effect on O₂ sensors

City Technology is undertaking long term tests to identify any effect and will report the results next Spring. Alphasense will be asked to clarify their statement on the effect. Gavin Boorman added that in some non-flue gas applications, such as tank purging where concentrations of 70% vol CO₂ are not uncommon, this increased oxygen signal effect is dramatic.

Post-meeting note: Alphasense are now conducting tests, but their current data suggests that at 10% vol CO₂, the oxygen sensor's sensitivity will be increased by approx 5% of its normal sensitivity.

Calibration

Having determined that all FGAs use stickers to easily identify calibration period validity, another issue is whether the industry assumes that all FGAs use a consistent approach to the annual calibration process. This is clearly not the case, as some labs (such as GES) have to employ different gas concentrations, tests and data recording techniques according to each manufacturer's requirements. Jonathan Kane said he would produce a briefing note on the subject for circulation to CoGDDEM members for comments.

7 CoGDDEM-sponsored CO alarm testing proposal, including gas canister testing

As a reaction to the ongoing spurious statements by Detectagas and CSI about CO alarm unreliability, it had been suggested that one way to approach this proactively could be for relevant CoGDDEM members to pay an accredited laboratory to conduct tests on CO alarms of various ages, using properly certified test gases, then using Detectagas. This would be similar to the successful testing undertaken by HSE/HSL in 2010, but with additional data that might show up the known shortcomings in the use of Detectagas.

With the progress that has been made with the 'Prosafe' market surveillance project reported in item 5 above, it is now felt not necessary to undertake any additional test work at this time. All manufacturers conduct long-term testing, particularly on sensors and batteries, and it may be possible for some of this data to be shared with LG. It was stated that Detectagas publicity, although frustrating, is not a serious issue for CoGDDEM or its members, as the large players in the gas industry do not give it any credibility.

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

The non-compliant CO alarm with a blue LCD continues to appear on the market occasionally, albeit in different moulding designs, sometimes (but not always) accompanied by false claims of compliance to EN 50291. We have successfully dealt with its recent appearances.

There are reports that a high street ironmongers chain may have started to stock 'black spot' CO indicator cards again, investigations are underway.

9 AOB (including updates from HSE, helpline)

a) HSE

Mike Hemingway updated members about the HSE's concerns of CO production when woodchips or pellets are stored in unventilated confined spaces. Recent test work has found that the production of CO and CO₂ is possible, but HSE has not found evidence of a significant risk of harmful concentrations occurring under normal circumstances.

b) GISG

CoGDDEM is a member of the Gas Industry Safety Group, and LG has now been elected onto its Board. GISG and ENA (Energy Networks Association) will be holding an 'industry-focused' Gas Industry Safety Week with a Parliamentary event on 22nd October 2013, CoGDDEM will demonstrate various relevant pieces of gas detection equipment to interested MPs and Lords. Those CoGDDEM members who co-sponsor the All Party Parliamentary CO Group (see item 3 above) have been invited to attend.

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c) **IGEM CO Conference**

IGEM (Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers) held its first ever CO conference in Derby on 11th July, and many CoGDEM members were present. CoGDEM gave a 15-minute presentation to the 150-strong 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, and some members exhibited their products on the day. The conference was deemed to be a success, and plans are already being made for a 2014 event. A recently released report on this year's conference can now be downloaded from www.igem.org.uk/co-report.

As can be seen in the report, the afternoon workshops covered a lot of ground, of particular interest to COGDEM Industrial Sub Group members was the discussion of the carrying of personal gas detectors by emergency workers responding to CO incidents, this will be covered in this afternoon's ISG meeting.

d) **GASG**

The next meeting of the Gas Analysis and Sensing Group will be titled 'A Blast from the Past and a Vision for the Future' (celebrating the 20th anniversary of GASG) and will be held on Thursday 5th December 2013 at the Institute of Materials, London.

e) **CoGDEM's CO Helpline**

LG had received some unusual calls since our last meeting, including the use of CO alarms in bathrooms containing a gas boiler, fitting a wall-mounting CO alarm on a ceiling to cover up a water stain, and confusion from an English local authority Buildings Control officer about the new Scottish rules applying in England (or not!).

f) **Blue Watch update**

Despite the mixed feelings from some CoGDEM members towards the CFA Blue Watch scheme to promote CO alarms, their team is actively promoting the need for Fire & Rescue Services to have a consistent approach to the subject. They also have excellent contacts with coroners and are pushing CO messages through that route, and also with lettings agents and landlords' associations. As part of their funding from Gas Safe Charity, CFA intend to set up a CO Advisory Forum (CFA COAF !!), so CoGDEM will endeavour to be part of this.

g) **Liverpool John Moores University CO project**

Phase 3 of the LJMU project with Fire & Rescue Services will be receiving funding from the Gas Safety Trust, and may kick-off this autumn. CoGDEM members may again be asked to contribute alarms and dataloggers. LG will be meeting Dr Andy Shaw of LJMU to discuss enhancements to the dataloggers to make them more suitable for the Phase 3 activities.

h) **CO Book**

A new 'book' on the risks from CO has been published by a small UK heating company, fortunately we were asked to proof read it prior to publication. It contained errors about CO alarms and some strange opinions and statements, most of which we were able to get corrected. It can be downloaded free from <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/342278>.

i) **Chimney Sweeps exhibition**

We have received data about the 2014 exhibition being organised by NACS (National Association of Chimney Sweeps). Members who are interested in exhibiting can get further details from LG or ZF.

10 Dates of 2014 CoGDEM meetings – Tues 11 Feb 2014, Tues 10 June 2014 and Tues 14 Oct 2014