

Minutes of Meeting

Document No CO-1448-15

Subject	CO Sub Group	Circulation	All members
Date	13 th Oct 2015	Circulation Date	3 rd Nov 2015
Location	CoGDEM offices Hitchin	Circulation by	Website & email

Attendees

Leigh Greenham - CoGDEM
John Saffell - Alphasense
David Johnson - Alphasense
Mike Byrne - Ei Electronics (Chair)
Colin Mitchell - Ei Electronics
Jonathan Kane - Kane International
Richard King - Honeywell Analytics
Phil Wild - Duomo
Damian Cairns - Anton
Ian Ballinger - Sprue Safety
John Walsh - Sprue Safety
Andrew Keenan - CSA Group (Sira)
John Darby - City Technology
Jason Perrins - FireBlitz
Brendan Simpson - FireBlitz
Peter Philpott - TPI
Kevin Honner - Draeger
Billy Mitchell - Smart Compliance
Neil Gwinnutt - A1-CBISS
Bernard Thomas - Kidde Safety
Kevin Milesen - GES
Mike Murley - Testo
Jane Mcleod - GSS (Gas Sensing Solutions)

Apologies

Tony Banfield - EXL/31/1 Chairman
John Sonley - JMS Consultants
Jeff Regan - JMS Consultants
Jonathan Gilby - City Tech
Graham McKay - BSI Global
Paul Walton - Shawcity
Rob Lyon - Sprue Safety
Neil Perdell - Aico
Martyn Whalley - Aico
Kevin Brown - SGX Sensortech
Andy Burnett - Kidde Safety
Andy Avenell - Crowcon
Mike Hemingway - HSL/HSE
Arthur Burnley - Alphasense
Colin Hydes - Honeywell Analytics
Jane Howitt - Honeywell Analytics
Alan Henderson - GSS (Gas Sensing Sols)
Adrian Keats - Honeywell Analytics
Zoe Forman - Mandeville Marketing

Agenda

- 1) Apologies and member introductions
- 2) Approval of previous minutes and matters arising
- 3) Lobbying activities (inc. All Party Group, GSR, CFA, Boat Safety, Ofgem and Europe)
- 4) Publicity update (inc. CO-Be Alarmed, Public Health Wales, SGN)
- 5) CO alarms standards review (inc. EN 50291-1, proposed standard for test gas)
- 6) Flue Gas Analysis (inc. tightness testing, GAR success)
- 7) Non-compliant CO alarms (inc. Prosafe and Trading Standards Partnership)
- 8) AOB (including LJM project, updates from HSE, helpline, CoGDEM member companies' financial contribution to the UK economy)
- 9) Dates of 2016 meetings – Tues 23 Feb 2016, Tues 21 Jun 2016, Tues 18 Oct 2016

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1 Apologies and member introductions

The above list of apologies was displayed, and members introduced themselves around the table.

2 Approval of previous minutes and matters arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting (16th June 2015, CO1447-15) were read and accepted. Matters arising were to be covered during the rest of the agenda.

3 Lobbying (inc. All Party Group, GSR, CFOA, Boat Safety, Ofgem, Europe)

All Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG):

LG gave an update on the Group's recent activities, reminding the meeting that some member companies had agreed to provide funding for the Group, so they were more involved with activities and updates than the general CoGDEM membership.

To enable commercial organisations to be involved with Parliamentary affairs, APPCOG has the 'All Fuels Action Forum' funded by industry (including CoGDEM) and overseen by an Advisory Group that LG is part of. This has met recently, as have the various subgroups, including a teleconference of the 'SciTech' sub group which is run by Roland Wessling and keeps tabs on relevant academic studies in the carbon monoxide area. This data is held on the publicly accessible CO Portal, funded by Gas Safety Trust but currently maintained by Cranfield University.

Quite an amount of work has gone into informing Parliamentarians of the shortcomings of the newly enacted regulations for smoke and CO alarms in certain private rented properties (from 1st October 2015). In particular the lack of emphasis from DCLG on the 'solid-fuel only' aspect of the CO alarm requirement has been criticised, leading to severe misunderstandings within the landlord and gas industries, somewhat fuelled by provocative and deliberately misleading PR from some of the usual suspects in the CO community.

The 'Helplines' sub group had a useful meeting at National Grid's emergency call centre in Hinckley, at which they stated their keenness to share statistics and scripts. Overall the call centre takes less emergency calls than in recent years, said to be a consequence of the mains replacement programme in which leaky iron gas pipes are being systematically replaced by new plastic pipes. Wales & West Utilities have shared some top level statistics on CO incidents, and it is hoped the other three GDNs will follow.

APPCOG organised an event in Parliament yesterday (12th October) to look at data collection and Smart Gas Meters, inviting the CoGDEM funders to attend. Although the Smart Meter industry groups put some effort into telling Baroness Finlay how the meter installation visits will give a great opportunity to spot potentially dangerous appliances or installations, there was some scepticism about this amongst attendees (due to meter swappers' competence, allocated time to inspect, own safety, lack of tools to spot CO). There was also some comment about the linking of CO alarms to Smart Meters and the ability (or lack of ability) of these meters to 'shout' when there has been an alarm activation.

APPCOG is attempting to convince the various campaigning groups to join forces when it comes to mass media publicity, but there has been a lack of progress with the first target of getting the gas retailers and gas distribution networks to act together. Consequently this year's 'CO Be Alarmed' campaign will continue to be a standalone effort by Energy UK (gas retailers), see later in these minutes.

Gas Safe Register

We have been told that September's Gas Safety Week was very successful, but there is little anecdotal evidence of coverage in the mass-media. CoGDEM's alarm manufacturers again generously donated some CO alarms to be used as prizes and give-aways during the week. GSR has spent a lot of time investigating the recent Which magazine reports of shoddy and unsafe boiler repairs being carried out by registered engineers, Barry Sheerman MP has called for a Parliamentary enquiry, but this is being resisted.

UK Fire & Rescue Services and CFOA

LG had been representing CoGDEM on the Chief Fire Officers Association's CO Advisory Forum, but this has ceased to meet as the Gas Safe Charity is no longer providing financial and secretarial support for the group. Instead, the CFOA Home Safety Representative with special responsibility for CO (Gary Oakford) will now be attending APPCOG Forum meetings.

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At the meeting in September, Gary confirmed that CFOA may need to change shape as Government funding and control will become closely aligned with the existing framework of Police & Crime Commissioners. But CFOA is promoting the prevention activities that the FRSSs undertake, emphasising that a lot more can be done.

Boat Safety

The funding proposal submitted to Gas Safe Charity by the Boat Safety Scheme and CFOA to work together on promoting CO awareness amongst boaters was rejected, primarily because it was not clear who any campaign should target. As previously reported, there are two other projects which BSS has proposed, both related to boat safety inspectors. Firstly, a CO training course linked to a funded project to equip the inspectors with leased multi-gas detectors to assess the level of unsafe atmospheres they come across in recreational boat cabins (CO, CO₂, LPG or fuel fumes, low O₂). LG is liaising with Kevin Miles of GES on this project, and BSS has just applied to the Gas Safety Trust for funding for the research part of the project. Secondly, BSS wants to conduct some behavioural research into the kind of boat users who are most at risk, so LG arranged a meeting with Dr Rachel McCloy of Reading University, who has agreed to be the academic lead in the project. Again, GST research funding has been applied for. Dr McCloy was the co-author of the APPCOG report with Baroness Finlay.

The trial has just finished of the Lake District boat-owner whose auxiliary petrol-powered generator installation led to the deaths from CO of two people on his cabin cruiser in 2013. He denied 'manslaughter by gross negligence' but was found guilty and now awaits sentencing. Publicity by BSS and APPCOG (and possibly MAIB) will have to wait until any appeal against his conviction is lodged.

Ofgem

LG sat on an independent judging panel for Ofgem's 2015 Discretionary Rewards Scheme in July. The four Gas Distribution Network companies, regulated by Ofgem, are encouraged to take initiatives that improve consumer safety and reduce fuel poverty. Ofgem and the panel heard four submissions (plus a joint submission to demonstrate their collaborative work) and £3 million of the available £4 million was allocated to the GDNs for their work in environmental, social and safety initiatives. Carbon monoxide related activities were key to this third category, and it was good to see the efforts being put in by the GDNs, even if several of them were claiming credit for CO initiatives that they were simply paying to be part of.

Europe

As Zoe couldn't be present today, LG gave a brief update on the European project. A small group of CoGDEN companies is using a Brussels-based lobbying organisation called ADS Insight to promote CO issues within the European Parliament, and recent efforts have focussed on the Gas Appliance Regulations and the Tourism Accommodation Bill.

Lobbying on the proposed changes to the Gas Appliance Regulations has had some success, with more clauses mentioning the risk of carbon monoxide emission if new appliances are not installed correctly. Sticking points had been the phraseology of heating engineers being 'competent' or 'professional' persons, and the recommendation of national inspection regimes.

The Tourism Bill was voted down on its first passage through the EC Parliament, despite the timely publicity that the 2006 Corfu incident received recently (Coroner's letter and recommendations). However, as a post-meeting note, a second attempt was more successful and an announcement was made on 29 Oct that the Bill is to be adopted. This is expected to ensure more consistent protection against fire and CO poisoning in holiday accommodation across Europe.

More detail has been made available to the members of the group who are funding this Brussels work, most of whom attended a briefing and planning meeting in Brussels early in October. They will also be invited to attend another 'round table' CO event in Brussels in January 2016. Zoe would welcome the involvement of more CoGDEN members for whom the European picture is important.

Jonathan Kane has been a very active member within the project, and considers that other European organisations might want to take part in some joint projects with ADS Insight. He will be proposing this to the German organisation FIGAWA. He floated the idea of a European version of CoGDEN, as we are seen by some to be a UK-only organisation, despite our membership being open to all.

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4 Publicity update, inc. CO-Be Alarmed, Public Health Wales and SGN

CO-Be Alarmed - This Energy UK-funded awareness campaign has run for many years, but staff changes within Energy UK and their chosen PR agency (Fishburn Hedges) have led to a disjointed and somewhat last minute approach this year. CoGDEM's view is that this campaign should be merged into a larger campaign funded by Energy UK and ENA (as mentioned in the APPCOG report above) but there doesn't seem to be the will on either side to do this. However, as a post-meeting note, we were approached by FH a week before a media launch of this year's campaign, to provide a donation of CO alarms in time for Thurs 29th October's coverage on ITV 'Good Morning Britain', BBC Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Show and over a dozen local radio stations. Zoe coordinated a hasty shipment of alarms from the generous manufacturers, and Leigh took part in the radio interviews alongside a celebrity victim of CO (singer Nadine Coyle from 'Girls Aloud'). The campaign will undertake a Parliamentary event in January as usual, asking MPs and members of the Lords to attend a photographic session to show their support for the campaign.

As in previous years, the lack of advance notice about CO-Be Alarmed campaigns has not allowed the CO alarm manufacturers to brief their retailers or wholesalers about likely increased demand. This has led some retailers to not give CO alarms any priority or prime locations in stores. John Walsh explained that Sprue had set up 'Project Shout' to give a higher profile to CO alarms, using Stacey Rodgers' story made into a TV ad that played on some of the terrestrial TV channels. Members were encouraged to look at the project's website.

LG mentioned that it is rumoured that ITV's 'Emmerdale' is to feature a storyline about carbon monoxide poisoning. It was remarked that a CO advert had been heard on Heart FM in the Midlands.

Public Health Wales – CoGDEM continues to support the Welsh initiatives and Zoe attends their regular meetings in Cardiff and reports back to her publicity sub group. At a recent meeting, a presentation from a Glamorgan Environmental Health Officer showed results from research into consumers' knowledge of CO issues with or without intervention. This presentation can be circulated to interested parties.

SGN's CO alarm initiative

Two meetings have taken place between CoGDEM's CO alarm manufacturers and Scotia Gas Networks' Chris Bielby, as reported previously. Progress has been slow, but the five CO alarm manufacturers wishing to take part have submitted their preferred models, and the ball remains in the court of SGN's commercial people who intend to meet with a couple of suggested 'fulfilment agents'. LG is attempting to stop the momentum from sliding any further, but it must be SGN that does the commercial 'negotiation', CoGDEM's role is to provide technical and logistical assistance only.

ITV 'Loose Women' – as reported in the last minutes, the Corfu incident was picked up by the lunchtime TV programme on 30 June and 1 July, with Chris Bielby as their go-to expert on CO, and 1200 CO alarms generously donated by CoGDEM's manufacturers to be given away as prizes. Post-meeting note: the producers have just informed Chris Bielby that one of the alarm recipients has been in touch to say the alarm "saved their life" after a double activation due to a faulty wood burning stove installation. We suspect this will provoke another item on a future programme (with potentially another request for more donations).

5 CO alarms Standards review (including EN 50291-1 & -2, proposed standard for test gas)

EN 50291-1 – Mike Byrne updated the meeting. As highlighted by recent Prosafe and Trading Standards reports, it remains absolutely crucial for EN 50291 compliance to become a mandatory requirement for all CO alarms, yet the standard is not yet in the correct format for it to be harmonised under a Directive (or Regulations). As decided just after our last CoGDEM meeting, CENELEC has agreed a further extension to the publication date of the updated version of the standard in the hope that this will allow time for the required Annex to be created and agreed prior to publication.

Richard King further pointed out that there may be a need to modify, remove or add certain clauses within the standard that refer to mandatory measuring functions.

Proposed new PAS standard for CO gas testing kits – LG updated the meeting on the issue as raised at the previous CoGDEM meeting. In summary, John Stones of Detectagas/Gas Safe Europe Ltd approached BSI about creating a standard for CO test gas kits. BSI explained that this would not be a BS, it would be a PAS (Publicly Available Specification) and they have subsequently indicated the likely cost of the project to GSE and indicated the need for involvement of other industry stakeholders. This has led to ongoing conversations between the two organisations which have yet to reach a conclusion.

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6 Flue Gas Analysis

Standards: Standards for FGAs are currently stable. As reported in 'Europe' above, recent healthy progress with the Gas Appliance Regulations should be very helpful, as will the wider remit of TS 50612 (European guidance on the use of FGAs) moving from solely covering gas boilers to most domestic gas-fuelled appliances.

Kevin Milesen pointed out that the optional CMDDA1 assessment for gas engineers currently covers the ambient monitoring of CO₂ as well as CO, but there had been requests to remove this as most FGAs do not measure CO₂ directly but calculate it in the flue gas only. BS 7967 only covers CO room build-up. UKAS is apparently against this change and would like to see CO₂ remain in the assessment.

Jonathan Kane mentioned that the rollout of Smart Gas Meters requires a tightness test to be performed after a meter swap has been performed. With the gas supply isolated, any loss of pressure in the pipework would signify a potential gas leak, so this is a vital test, likely to be conducted with a manometer or an FGA having the necessary functionality. Therefore the accuracy of the instrument is crucial, and although the pressure sensing characteristics of an FGA are covered by EN 50379, a standalone manometer has no such standard, so it is felt that one should be developed. This might also take into account a trend for the instrument to automate the test itself and report its result wirelessly. JK suggested creating such a new standard could be quite straightforward by using EN 50379 as a template and removing all the clauses not relevant to pressure sensing, so he agreed to circulate an early draft to CoGDEM members before submitting it to EXL/31/1 and onwards to the European committee TC216.

Anniversary of boiler commissioning FGA requirement

There was some good publicity in the trade press around the anniversary of the requirement to use FGAs when commissioning domestic gas boilers. Readers were reminded that the official UK industry guidance on how to do this (including a limit on CO emissions) was published jointly by Gas Safe Register and HHIC as a Technical Bulletin (TB 143). JK suggested that to get equivalents to TB143 published in other countries would be extremely useful. Even if other country versions were not forthcoming, just promoting the existence of TB143 could in itself be useful to the industry and highlight the need for competence amongst the workforce of gas engineers outside of the UK. We will again ask for HHIC assistance to get EHI involvement with this idea.

7 Non-compliant CO alarms (inc. Prosafe and Trading Standards Partnership)

Market surveillance of CO alarms – The PROSAFE report included an anonymous summary of the test results from the project conducted at BSI, and was published earlier this year. The PROSAFE text was less than helpful with its comments about the Construction Products Regulations not being the right 'home' for EN 50291, and it is felt that the report did not stress that the alarms selected for testing at BSI were ones that raised suspicions in the European countries where they were being sold. Some European countries have used the PROSAFE report as the basis for recalling non-compliant alarms.

It is a shame that the report did not highlight the importance of using truly compliant CO alarms, and in some territories the report has been used to suggest that all CO alarms are unreliable. An example of this might be in the Netherlands where a national report is expected soon, so it has been suggested that CoGDEM forms a small Dutch subgroup to enable our ADS Insight team to address any issues that might arise (see 'Europe' in 3 above).

BBC 'Fake Britain' - As reported at the last meeting, Graham McKay was interviewed as part of the filming at the BSI Loughborough labs after some surveillance testing of non-compliant CO alarms was undertaken there for the BBC. However, he has updated LG that the date of the broadcast is still unknown, perhaps this is not a high priority for the programme producers as the results were not as spectacularly bad as they might have hoped!

Primary Authority Partnership between CoGDEM & Trading Standards – Following the discussions and agreement at the summer CoGDEM meetings, LG has established a Primary Authority Partnership between CoGDEM and the Trading Standards department of Oxfordshire County Council, linked to Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. This partnership is likely to cost CoGDEM around £500 per annum depending on the number of hours spent by the TS, starting with a two-hour training session on gas detection and carbon monoxide that LG gave them in September. The initial focus is likely to be non-compliant domestic CO alarms, but all CoGDEM members can make use of the arrangements.

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We used the PAP to get access to West Sussex Trading Standards after they issued a press release about some surveillance testing they performed where eight out of ten CO alarms tested did not comply with EN 50291. This headline was grabbed by Gas Safe Europe to make some negative statements about CO alarm reliability. We are still trying to get WSTS to tell us who did the testing and which alarms were involved, as their PR mentioned cheap alarms bought via the internet.

8 AOB (including LJMU project, updates from HSE, helpline, CoGDEM member companies' financial contribution to the UK economy)

a) Liverpool John Moores University Project

Progress remains slow and updates are hard to come by. As this is a joint project with several Fire & Rescue Services around the UK, CFOA has assigned Mark Jones from Merseyside FRS to be closely involved with the project and to ensure that the relevant FRSs are undertaking the surveys and using the dataloggers and CO alarms that CoGDEM member companies donated.

b) HSE

Neither Peter Walsh nor Mike Hemingway could attend today, but Mike told LG just prior to the CoGDEM meeting that the practical work has now been completed on the project that HSL is conducting for IGEM/Gas Safety Trust to look into increased health risks from carbon monoxide/carbon dioxide in modern dwellings because of increased use of flueless gas appliances and lower ventilation rates. A report is soon to be submitted to IGEM/GST.

c) GASG

The next meeting of the Gas Analysis and Sensing Group will be their pre-Christmas event in London on Thursday 3rd December, with the title "**All in the best possible taste - the Agri-food Gas Sensing Symposium**". See the GASG website for more details.

d) IGEM

Philip Wild of Duomo is one of the CoGDEM members who keeps us informed of relevant regulatory, guidance or standards work being undertaken by IGEM. He mentioned that UP19 has now been published, giving useful guidance on the monitoring of CO₂ concentrations in commercial catering environments. UP11 covering ventilation in schools also mentions CO₂ monitoring, but this remains a work in progress.

In each of the last two years, IGEM has organised dedicated conferences on the subject of CO, although some delegates found that last year's did not contain much new material. This year they broadened their conference's scope to downstream gas utilisation, which included references to CO, so some CoGDEM members exhibited there. Post meeting note: The conference was held on 21st Oct 2015 in Solihull, and LG gave a presentation on CoGDEM's new partnership with Trading Standards and the need for vigilance with non-compliant CO alarms.

e) CoGDEM's CO Helpline

LG highlighted some of the more unusual calls received in the last few months, including the August Bank Holiday Monday call from a lady in the Isle of Wight who thought her CO alarm activation was a false alarm until she described the soup-cooking she had been doing for several hours, as well as the collection of motor scooters that were meeting outside her home.

Another unusual helpline call related to the use of domestic CO alarms to protect staff in a biomass power generating facility. As well as a flow of information about the lack of fitness-for-purpose and the need for industrial-grade equipment, there was also a conversation about the how the safety 'manager' was testing these alarms with a product bought from a local supermarket. The headspace above freshly ground coffee in sealed packs contains some 300ppm CO due to the roasting process, so packs opened directly below the sensor would apparently cause an activation of the alarm.

f) Smart Compliance

Billy Mitchell of Smart Compliance gave a brief update from the field trials being conducted with some of the Gas Distribution Networks, mentioning that at least three genuine CO incidents had been identified so far. Fumes from a generator caused one alarm to register 155ppm CO, fumes from a workman's butane torch caused an alarm activation, and a third event is currently being investigated by National Grid.

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g) CoGDEM members' financial contribution to the UK economy

There have been some occasions when we have needed to explain to third parties that although gas detection may appear to be a niche subject, we actually represent a sizeable industry and therefore make a significant contribution to the UK economy. Our industry employs a lot of people, does a lot of R&D, makes significant exports and generates good tax revenues for the Treasury. And that's on top of saving lives!

We will try to make estimates of the financial contribution and other statistics from our industry, relying on confidential figures or estimates from our members. We recognise that some member companies will be unable or unwilling to divulge figures (even though these will be kept utterly confidential by LG), but we'll see how far we get. The Steering Group will agree a template for members to fill in, this will then be distributed.

9 Dates of 2016 CoGDEM meetings

Tuesday 23rd February 2016
Tuesday 21st June 2016 (AGM)
Tuesday 18th October 2016