

GasBag™



A Newsletter for those working with extinguishing agents

1st Issue 2010

In This Issue: Board Member Profile, News from the Board, 2010 Review of ODS & SGG Code of Practice; Transition to a Qualified Persons Licence; Know the Regulations and Your Responsibilities.

The Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board

Board Member Profile: Ray Walton

Ray Walton has been involved in the Aerospace & Defence industry for over 30 years.



In 1978 Ray joined the Royal Australian Air Force and trained as an Aircraft Fitter, eventually working on Macchi jet trainers and the venerable Douglas Dakota aircraft after graduating in 1979. Promotions and job changes over his 15 year service career saw him at various RAAF establishments, culminating in teaching adult trainees and apprentices at the RAAF School of Technical Training at Wagga Wagga in NSW.

In the mid nineties Ray returned to the Aerospace industry with the then BTR Aerospace in Bayswater, Victoria. BTR subsequently became Hawker de Havilland (HdH) when acquired by Boeing. Ray started at HdH as the operation's Sales Engineer, which was followed by Program Management duties and the last three years as the organisation's Business Development Manager.

Ray took up the role of Aviation & Defence manager at Kidde Australia in late 2003. The division Kidde Aerospace & Defence Pty Ltd is currently located at Dandenong South, Victoria.

During Ray's seven years with Kidde Australia and Kidde Aerospace & Defence he has overseen the Repair and Maintenance operations of Fire Protection equipment fitted to commercial & military aircraft and military armoured vehicles. It was his long industry experience and current involvement with fire protection equipment which ensured his representation for the aerospace & defence sector on the Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board, Ray was appointed to the Board in 2006.

Ray's experience in aerospace & defence has covered air, land and sea through major defence and commercial programs. He loves the diversity of his job and in particular the responsibility of saving/protecting lives with the complex equipment involved in aircraft and military vehicles. As he states "I get to play with the big boys toys".

Ray is married to Susan, has three teenage daughters and has lived in Tecoma (in the fire prone Dandenong Ranges) for 15 years. He has a keen interest in sports, particularly golf now that age has caught up with the more active sports.

Members of the Board:

Chris Orr	Brooks (Chair)
Scott Williams	FPA Australia
Pat McNerney	DEWHA
Brian Hobsbawn (observing)	DEWHA
Barry Lee OAM	Lee Fire Management
Roger Thomas	Tyco
Brett Staines	Chubb
Ray Walton	Kidde
Vic Percival	Lateral Fire Design
Carlos Santin	Executive Officer

News from the Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board

The Board noted at its April 2010 meeting that the number of new licence applications was continuing to increase. This clearly shows that the fire protection industry is increasingly aware of the need to hold appropriate licences.

This in part is recognition by our industry of the importance of working in a professional and responsible manner. Technicians who handle ODS & SGG extinguishing agents without a licence face prosecution and companies that engage unlicensed technicians are also putting themselves at risk.

Technicians should ensure that their licence is current. When the licence needs to be reissued it is the responsibility of the technician to make sure it is paid. If an employer is willing to pay for the licence costs, it is still the responsibility of the technician to pass the reissue notice and then confirm that it is paid. This can be easily done as you will receive a new licence permit card. If your licence is not current then you aren't licensed.

2010 Review of the ODS & SGG Code of Practice (CoP) – Your chance for input

The **ODS & SGG Code of Practice (CoP)** was prepared by the Board to guide practitioners and companies. However, the Board recognises that Codes of Practice must be able to evolve and change as experience recognises new and better



ways to achieve compliance with the legislation. The Board therefore proposes to conduct a review of the CoP during June and July 2010. Comments must be received by close of business on Friday 30th July 2010.

You can download the CoP from:
www.fpaa.com.au - Ozone & Greenhouse - Code of Practice. Alternatively if you would like a hardcopy or word version please email the Executive Officer at ozone@fpaa.com.au or call (03) 9890 1544.

The current CoP applies to all fire system practitioners who handle ODS & SGG extinguishing agents. It also applies to companies who trade in extinguishing agents or who possess halon.

The CoP details the responsibilities and procedures that must be complied with to meet the provisions of the regulations. This includes inspection, maintenance, installation and decommissioning practices. It also includes practices relating to recovery, reclamation and disposal.

Appendix 1 describes the criteria for certification of ODS & SGG Extinguishing agent recovery and recycling equipment.

Your views are very important. If you have any comments on any parts of the CoP could you please forward them to the executive officer at ozone@fpaa.com.au to ensure they can be considered in the review.

Transition to a Qualified Persons Licence

Board provides first Qualified Persons Licence – Category 1

Mike Sheedy has been the first person to be issued with a Qualified Persons Licence – category 1.



Mike has worked 30 years in the Utility, Power Generation and Petro-chemical Industries as well as a six year stint in the Reserve Forces. He has worked across all industry maintenance sectors and process operations of the Water & Effluent Treatment, Power Generation and Chemical manufacturing industries. In these positions he has held all levels of accountability from technician to manager whilst working for companies such as I.C.I., Honeywell, Orica and Exxon-Mobil.

While at Asset Safety Pty Ltd, Mike has been involved with individuals and businesses undertaking the Certificate II and Certificate III programs in Asset Maintenance – Fire Protection.

Mike has also undertaken a number of training courses offered by manufacturers of both pre-engineered and piped gaseous, wet chemical and aqueous systems and has been qualified as an assessor.

Requesting feedback from licence holders

As you would be aware, the Qualified Persons licences are to be phased in gradually, to minimise possible disruption to industry.



As previously informed when re issuing a technicians licence (1 and/or 4), a 12 month transition period was provided in which to acquire a Qualified Persons licence.

The transition process provides pathways for fire protection technicians who currently hold an Experienced Persons licence (1 and/or 4) to have their skills and knowledge assessed or recognised against national units of competency.

Important to note:

- Technicians can apply for a qualified licence at any time if they believe they hold the necessary skills and knowledge (final stage contacting a Registered Training Organisation) and/or certified copies of statements of attainment for the required units of competency as per the licence category.
- The first stage of the process is to use the Recognition Gateway. However, if a technician has limited experience it would be best to contact an RTO or speak with their supervisor.

Please forward any comments or recommendations regarding the current transition process to the Executive Officer at ozone@fpaa.com.au to ensure they can be considered in a review for the roll out of other licence categories.

Reporting of unlicensed technicians and businesses

The Board and DEWHA encourage industry to report any instances where unlawful activity has occurred. However, for the Board and DEWHA to be able to take any action the name of the person that is suspected of acting illegally and an address of the site where illegal activity is taking place must be provided. In instances where illegal activity has been identified, the Board can approach the unlicensed person and/or business and assist them in complying with the regulations.

Conditions for the sale of ODS & SGG extinguishing agents to non-authorisation holders

The Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board wishes to inform all authorisation holders the transition arrangements put in place in 2009 will be coming to an end effective immediately. The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) has sent formal correspondence to all current authorisation holders. ODS & SGG extinguishing agents may not be





acquired, possessed or disposed of unless the company/individual holds an authorisation. In practice this also means that a company/individual cannot supply agent to any person unless they are the holders of an authorisation.

Where a company/individual does not hold an authorisation, the company should be made aware of the requirements of Regulation 303 and provided with the opportunity to obtain an authorisation. Approval to supply an ODS & SGG extinguishing agent can be made in advance of the authorisation being issued where supply is urgent. However the company must, at a minimum, have forwarded a completed application form and application fee.

The form can be downloaded from: www.fpaa.com.au

The application form can be faxed, emailed or sent by post:

Attention:

Executive Officer - Ozone Protection
Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board
PO Box 1049
Box Hill Vic 3128
F 03 9890 1577
E ozone@fpaa.com.au

Approval to supply a company in the absence of an authorisation must be obtained from the Executive Officer of the Fire Protection Industry Board. In cases of urgency, the matter may also be referred to DEWHA.

- Executive Officer – Ozone Protection Phone: (03) 9890 1544 Fax: 03 9890 1577 Email: ozone@fpaa.com.au
Or
- Brian Hobsbawn, Assistant Director, Ozone & Synthetic Gas Team, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. Phone: (02) 6274 1495
Email: Brian.Hobsbawn@environment.gov.au

A current listing of all Permit, Authorisations and/or companies employing licensed technicians can be downloaded from: www.fpaa.com.au

Authorisation and Halon Special Permit holders to report Quarterly ODS & SGG Usage



The Board wishes to draw attention to all authorisation and halon special permit holders of the requirement to report the amounts of extinguishing agent acquired, disposed of and recovered from equipment during the last quarter. We wish to thank all companies who have sent back their forms and remind those who haven't to please do so as soon as possible.

Industry lessons from reported causes of accidental discharges- "It just went off in my hand chief!"

Accidental discharges of gaseous extinguishing agents are not common. But when they do occur they cost clients money and cause disruption to business. In addition they impact on the environment. If everything is properly installed accidental discharges should not happen but there are situations that can lead to accidental discharges.

Some accidental discharges which occurred during 2009/2010:

- Faulty solenoid valve on a halon bottle.
ACTION: The halon bottle and release valve were sent to service agent (Halon Special Permit holder) and valve was replaced.
- Incorrect isolation- de isolation procedure by technician during work procedure.
ACTION: Implementation of further awareness training.
- Boat owner was in the engine bay in rough seas when he was knocked off balance and fell backwards when he put his hand out to support himself and made contact with the cable of the cylinder which set it off.
ACTION: Due to the hazard as a result of the extinguishing agent, no one will be allowed to enter the engine bay in rough seas.
- Personnel not trained in isolation of system. Manual release was operated (glass had been forced behind the micro switch) with glass unbroken. A discharge occurred into both the switch room and control room.
ACTION: Implementation of awareness and technician training of access to switch room. Replaced manual release glass and reset zone. Replaced FM200 bottles and reset pressure switches and zones.
- Faulty firing pin on old solenoid.
ACTION: Faulty solenoid was replaced.
- During proposed maintenance to the jetty head control cabin – power systems tripped. Discharge occurred when carrying out the step on the air conditioning shutdown.
ACTION: Modify the job plan to specify which buttons to push to activate the air conditioning unit shutdown. Modify sequence of steps where the unit shutdown check is carried out while the system is isolated.

A way to help ensure mistakes aren't made is to place a notice near cylinders clearly stating that the system is a gas system and must only be serviced by a person holding a Fixed system testing and maintenance extinguishing agent licence. A list of basic actions required to safely test cylinder discharge valves could also be included to ensure that licensed service personnel are aware of the particular system and how to test it safely.

If you want to contribute further suggestions, please send us the details to ozone@fpaa.com.au and we will put them into the next issue of GasBag.





Industry Site Visits – Technicians operating without a licence

The Board has begun a process of undertaking an industry consultation program focused primarily on education and compliance by industry.



The site visits have proved extremely successful and we have received practical feedback from industry. **Various company and individual contacts where alleged illegal activity was identified have been referred to the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) for further action.**

To date we have conducted the following:

1. Visits to Authorisation and Halon Special Permit holders in NSW, VIC, WA and TAS
2. Visits to companies not employing licenced technicians in NSW, VIC, WA and TAS

There are also further planned site visits in other states in 2010.

Another way to help the environment – let us email GasBag to you



Another way to help the environment is to have an electronic version of GasBag emailed to you. Email and internet play an increasingly important role in operating your business, and many of you have already registered to receive GasBag via email. To register, simply email us at ozone@fpaa.com.au

Industry News

Outcomes from consultation with National Marine Safety Committee (NMSC)



The mission of the NMSC is to improve marine safety in Australia, for the benefit of the community and the maritime industry by facilitating and supporting a co-operative and coordinated approach to the efficient and effective administration of marine safety within the Australian Federation, comprising of the Commonwealth, States and Territory Governments.

As a direct result of consultation with the NMSC in late 2009, the Board has been advised some information regarding technician and authorisation requirements are now posted on the NMSC website. It can be found at: www.nmsc.gov.au

The Board would also like to thank the NMSC secretariat for all their help in promoting proper technician licensing within the marine industry.

Website to connect fire technicians around Australia



A new interactive website is being developed to improve skills in fire protection industry practice. Fire protection service technicians will use innovative web 2.0 technology to access and share best practice workplace examples on the website. The Hub website will also offer technicians the chance to develop information technology skills and create an e-portfolio to store evidence of their own work tasks.

The project is being led by the Fire Protection Association Australia in partnership with the Country Fire Authority (CFA), Fire Equipment Maintenance Division (FEM), Swinburne University of Technology and other members of the fire protection industry.

A simple online site will be created, where technicians will upload workplace examples using multimedia tools. The technicians will be provided with phone and email support to learn how to send in and publish their photo, video and audio work examples on the web. Participants can choose whether to publish to the website housing workplace demonstrations or to their own space to build an e-portfolio.

The photo, video and audio examples published on the Hub will be validated by technical experts from the fire protection industry. Technicians will use the website to update, maintain, demonstrate and share their fire protection industry skills at a time and pace that suits them. The design of the website will encourage content collection and provide access to social networking features such as a blog or forum.

It is hoped the site will become a useful resource to bring members of the industry located in remote, regional and metropolitan areas together to support and share comment on best practice examples of fire protection work.

We hope by creating and supporting the online space, the project will increase computer literacy among fire protection service technicians. The combination of web 2.0 skills and industry support can build confidence to use computers to generate and share information to increase workplace fire safety.

Contact for the project

If you have photos or videos of fire protection tasks that could be shared on the website, or if you are interested to trial the website to show evidence of work completed in the industry, please contact Katharine Ebbs at FPA Australia at katharineebbs@fpaa.com.au or 03 9890 1544.

