



16<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## **RACHP Industry responds on future needs for refrigerant handling training**

ACRIB conducted a survey of its members during April / May this year designed to provide information on the views of the RACHP industry towards refrigerant handling training, qualifications and skills. This relates to the future review of the GB F Gas Regulations and the EU proposals to introduce mandatory certification for flammables and certification for carbon dioxide and ammonia for those working with these types of refrigerant.

The summary data presented below reflects the findings of this survey to which 132 individuals responded. ACRIB is sharing these results and conclusions with industry, stakeholders and national policy makers. A meeting with DEFRA was held on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2025 to propose that industry views and readiness for training on these alternative refrigerants is taken into account, as DEFRA prepares for its consultation on appropriate legislative approaches to refrigerant handling. Industry emphasises the need for safe, efficient, cost-effective industry-led approach.

The survey showed strong support from employers for mandatory certified training for those handling flammable refrigerants with options required for those handling other alternative refrigerants including carbon dioxide and ammonia. This is something that the industry, through trade associations and bodies such as ACRIB has been calling for action on since a position paper was first issued to Ministers at DEFRA in 2019. These survey results signpost for industry that employers need to continue to invest in training in this area to ensure their workforce is up to date and working safely. The results also send a clear message to policy makers that future F-Gas legislation needs revision to meet industry needs.

### **1. Background to survey**

132 individual responses were received across the 10 ACRIB member organisations through which the survey was distributed. This includes both trade associations and professional bodies, and some respondents were inevitably members of more than one group. See the list of member organisations below.

The majority (60%) described themselves as employers of operatives who are directly involved in the handling of refrigerants i.e. contractors and manufacturers. A small number of end users who employ operatives directly also took part. There were additional responses from trainers, consultants, and representatives of other groups.

A large number of micro businesses employing less than 4 operatives who handle refrigerants took part – just over 30%. The next biggest group were employers of 5-20, also at over 30%. A smaller proportion employed 21-50 people (less than 10%) and around 12% employ over 50 people. Many organisations said they also employ small numbers of subcontractors to carry out this type of work – although a few had larger numbers of subcontractors. This is reasonably reflective of the profile and size of businesses in the sector.

## 2. Conclusions drawn from the Survey Results

1. There are high levels of awareness of the **availability of qualifications** for handling of flammable refrigerants, hydrocarbons, carbon dioxide and ammonia. Over 80% of those who responded said they were aware of certified training for all of these refrigerants. In particular awareness and support for the existing ACRIB Flammable training specification as a basis for these qualifications was high. This is perhaps not surprising given that the survey was sent out to members of trade associations and professional institutes who would be expected to be reasonably well informed by their membership body.
2. Another positive finding of the survey is that **many employers already have the necessary certified training in place** – or are planning to do so. Although more support is needed for micro businesses in this area - when broken down by size and type of employer the number in the micro businesses is lower at 73%. Overall however this is still an indicator of a strong commitment to training on refrigerant handling in the sector.
3. There appears to be **overwhelming support for the introduction of mandatory flammable refrigerant certified training** alongside or in the next GB F-Gas regulation, to bring alignment with the EU F-Gas Regulation requirements already in place. This is also true for bringing in carbon dioxide and ammonia training under the Regulation for anyone who handles these refrigerants.
4. There are **mixed views on the need for regular recertification** – with a fairly even split between those who would like to see renewal every 5 years brought in, and those who only want to recertify when legislation changes. Again it is the smaller employers in the contracting sector who tend to be less supportive of a regime of regular reassessment. However ACRIB notes that under the EU F-Gas Regulation, UK Building Safety Act, and to align with Engineering Services CSC Skills Card renewal periods, regular refresher assessment as a means of proof of competence is something that the sector is likely to have to move towards in the future. Refresher assessment under the EU F-Gas Regulation of a maximum of 7 years has seen most EU countries opt for a 5 year renewal period as a compromise. This aligns with the CSC SkillCard renewal periods.
5. The survey also canvassed views on awareness and understanding of how to apply safety regulations: Pressure Equipment (Safety) Regulations, Pressure Systems Safety Regulations and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations. Again high levels of awareness were indicated by those who responded. This shows that the trade associations are doing a good job in **pointing to HSE guidance** and provide industry development information to ensure systems are being installed and tested safely.

## 3. Industry views

Below some relevant comments from survey respondents illustrate concerns around enforcement and creating a “level playing field” for those who invest in training and competence.

*An improved Flammable refrigerant handling training module is required, Training and certification should be more available, and the recording of training should be on a data base for*



checking i.e. subcontractors and by end user/customer. Awareness needs to be made that only certified technicians should be used for the relevant categories.

With the changes to refrigerants available, especially Low GWP and flammability a certified scheme should be in place to restrict the sale of this equipment and refrigerant.

Current mandatory training doesn't go far enough c&g ,2079 is a regs course and other than this no additional training is required, training providers should vet for relevant experience and qualifications before certification for cat 1

The cost of compliance is already having an effect on my earnings potential when others can buy refrigerant ....(without investing in qualifications)

For me, I have long argued that there should be training and certification, as the F-gas regulations, for HC and A2 / A3 refrigerants, so it is welcome although I do have reservations with regard to "the cost of compliance" especially with regard to SME's. I also have concerns about placing the onus of system design on the "contractor"

Regulations, refrigerants, legal rulings change, refresher courses should encompass more of the compliance and governance side along with actual hands on and safety education.

#### 4. Annexes

##### A. List of ACRIB member organisations and number of respondents

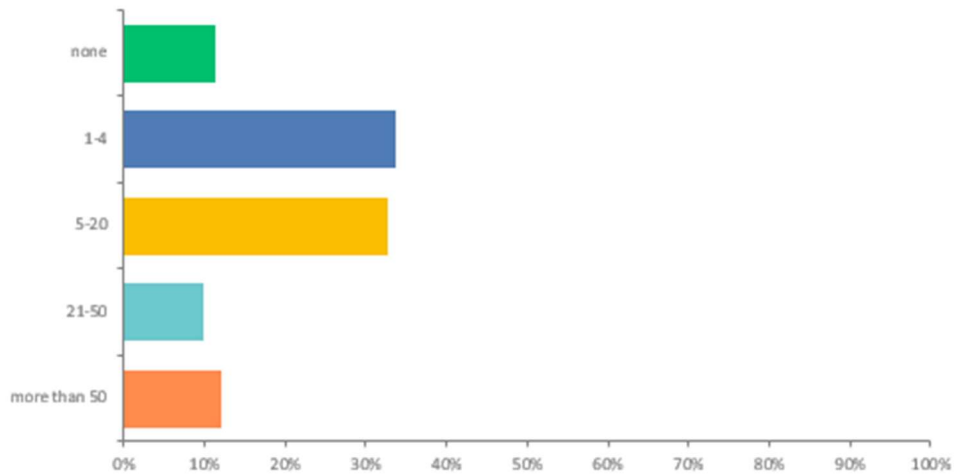
| ANSWER CHOICES         | RESPONSES |            |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| ARC                    | 4.55%     | 6          |
| BESA                   | 18.18%    | 24         |
| BRA                    | 8.33%     | 11         |
| CRT                    | 0.76%     | 1          |
| CIBSE                  | 12.12%    | 16         |
| CCF                    | 0.76%     | 1          |
| FEA                    | 2.27%     | 3          |
| HEVAC                  | 1.52%     | 2          |
| HPA                    | 3.03%     | 4          |
| IOR                    | 90.91%    | 120        |
| Other (please specify) | 15.91%    | 21         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           |           | <b>209</b> |



B – Survey result tables and graphs

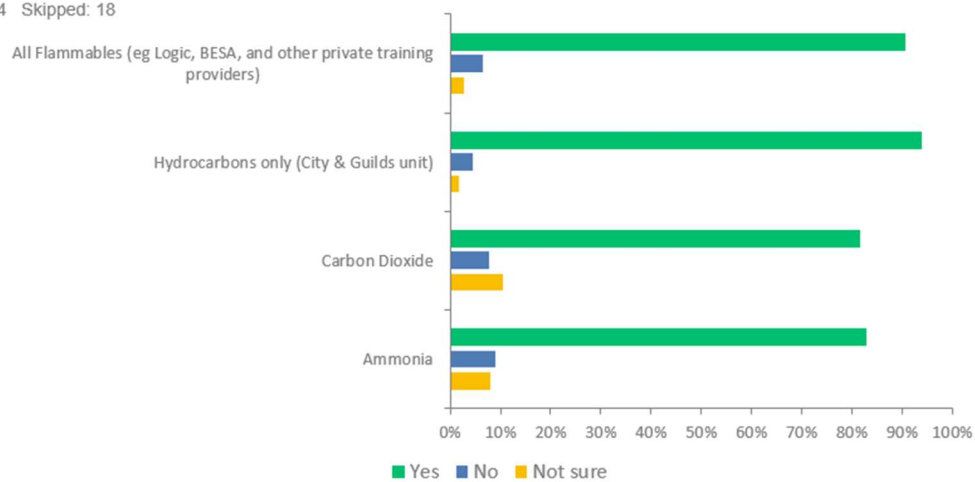
**Q5: How many operatives who handle refrigerants under the F-Gas Regulations (ie hold F-Gas certificates) do you employ directly?**

Answered: 131 Skipped: 1



**Q7: If you work with non F-Gas refrigerants were you aware that the following certified training is available? (Skip this question if you do not work with these refrigerants)**

Answered: 114 Skipped: 18

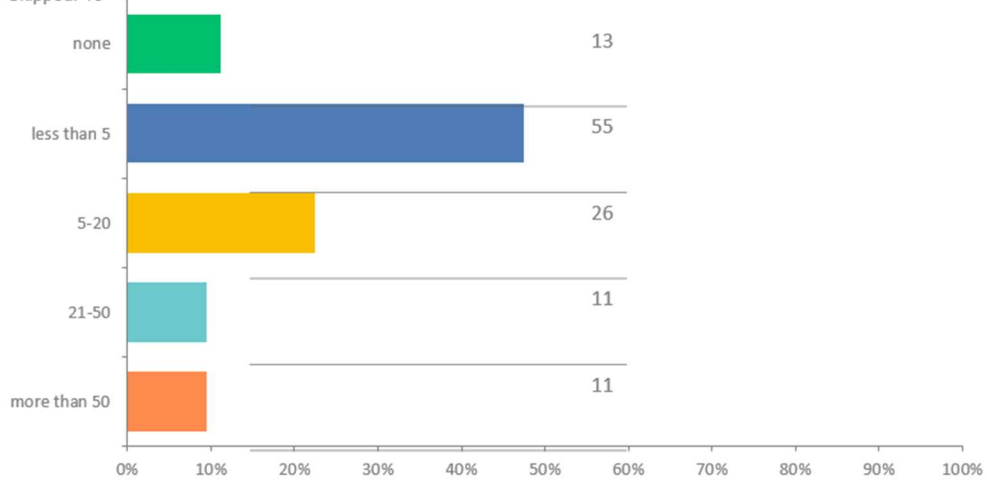




**B**

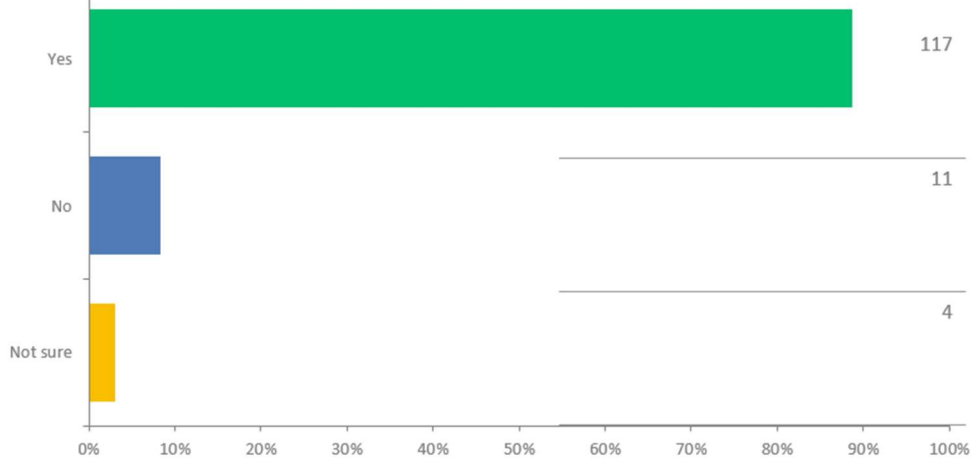
**Q8: How many of the operatives that you employ to handle Flammables / Hydrocarbons / HFOs hold a relevant training certificate? (skip this question if you do not work with these refrigerants)**

Answered: 116 Skipped: 16

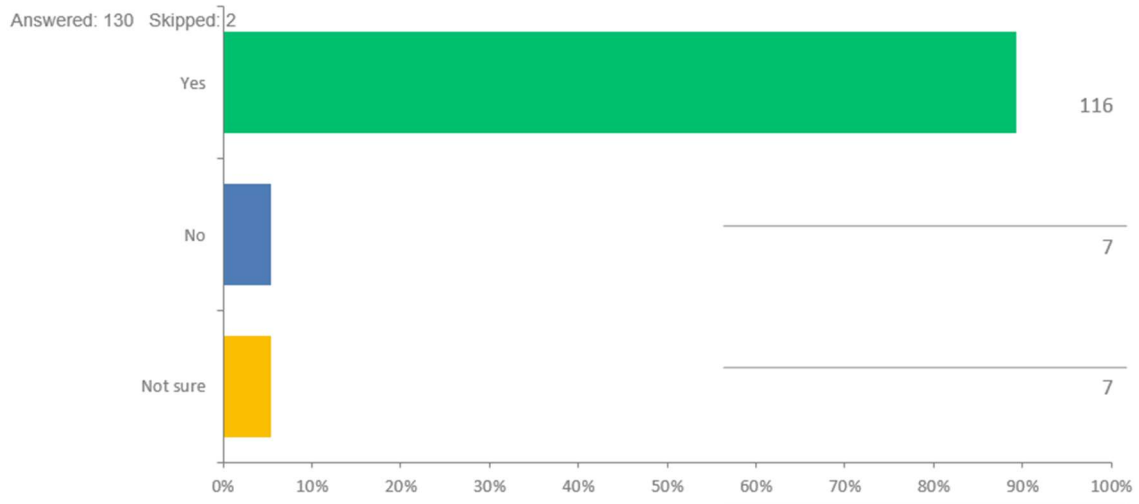


**Q14: Under the revised EU F-Gas Regulation certified training for Flammable refrigerants will be mandatory for all operatives who are within scope of the current F-Gas certification requirements. Do you agree that this approach should be introduced in the GB legislation?**

Answered: 132 Skipped: 0



**Q15: Under the revised EU F-Gas Regulation certified training for the handling of Carbon Dioxide and Ammonia has been included as mandatory only for operatives who handle these types of refrigerant. Do you agree that this approach should be introduced in the GB legislation?**



**C - How many of the operatives that you employ to handle Flammables / Hydrocarbons / HFOs hold a relevant training certificate?**

| Number of responses | Type of business                      | No employed directly to handle refrigerants | Number of responses where all or majority were trained in flammables | % not trained yet |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------|
| 85                  |                                       |   |  |                   |
| 26                  | Contractor / Manufacturer             | 1-4   | 73%  | 27%               |
| 33                  | Contractor / Manufacturer             | 5-20  | 94%  | 6% *              |
| 11                  | Contractor / Manufacturer             | 21-50                                       | 100%   |                   |
| 8                   | Contractor / Manufacturer             | Over 50                                     | 100%   |                   |
| 3                   | End user that employs own technicians | 5 to 20                                     | 100%   |                   |
| 4                   | End user that employs own technicians | 21 to 50                                    | 100%   |                   |

\*Subcontractors or consultants are used for this work.

D - How often do you think operatives who handle refrigerants should undergo certified refresher training for the refrigerant they use?

| Number of responses | Type of business                      | No employed directly to handle refrigerants | Renew 2-3 yrs | Renewable every 5 yrs | Renew every 7 years | Only when legislation changes |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 24                  | Contractor / Manufacturer             | 1-4   | 4%            | 25%                   | 17%                 | 54%                           |
| 30                  | Contractor / Manufacturer             | 5-20  | 3%            | 57%                   | 10%                 | 30%                           |
| 11                  | Contractor / Manufacturer             | 21-50                                       | -             | 36%                   | 18%                 | 46%                           |
| 11                  | Contractor / Manufacturer             | Over 50                                     | -             | 45%                   | -                   | 54%                           |
| 4                   | End user that employs own technicians | 1 to 20                                     | -             | 75%                   | -                   | 25%                           |
| 4                   | End user that employs own technicians | 21 to 50                                    | -             | 50%                   | -                   | 50%                           |

Please contact the Company Secretary, Miriam Rodway for more information at [acrib@acrib.org.uk](mailto:acrib@acrib.org.uk)

ACRIB is an umbrella organisation for the UK RACHP industry comprising trade associations and professional institutes: AMDEA, ARC, B&ES, BFFF, CIBSE, CESA, CRT, FETA, CCF, IOR. It provides the ACRIB Skillcard scheme for the recognition of individual operative qualifications in working with the full range of refrigerants. For more information see [www.acrib.org.uk](http://www.acrib.org.uk).

ACRIB accepts no responsibility for errors or omissions.

#### Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Board member organisations



The Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Industry Board is a company limited by guarantee established in 1995