



## Facility managers advised to verify fire protection industry permits

The [Fire Protection Industry \(ODS & SGG\) Board](#) (FPIB) is calling on facility managers across Australia to remain diligent when contracting fire protection companies.

It is an Australian Government requirement that any fire technician handling extinguishing agents listed in Schedule 1 of the [Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989](#) hold a valid extinguishing agent handling licence (EAHL).

If your facility is required to contract a fire protection company to carry out installation, testing, maintenance or decommissioning of a fixed gaseous suppression system containing or connected to a scheduled extinguishing agent, it is crucial that you verify with the FPIB that these technicians hold the correct qualifications.

To verify if your contractor holds an EAHL, simply call the FPIB on **03 8892 3183** and we can confirm this for you in a matter of minutes.

It is imperative that fire technicians are aptly skilled and suitably qualified if required to handle scheduled extinguishing agents contained in gaseous fire suppression systems.

Using unlicensed technicians to perform work on these systems can lead to the scheduled extinguishing agent discharging and releasing harmful chemicals into the atmosphere which can contribute to global warming and depletion of the Earth's ozone layer. These chemicals are known as ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases.

Facility managers should be aware that the discharge of a scheduled extinguishing agent can result in a significant disruption to business operations, not to mention a hefty cost to replace the agent.

This is why facility managers should ensure that their current (or prospective) fire protection contractors have employees that are appropriately licensed under the [Fire Protection Permit Scheme](#) before allowing them on site to work on a suppression system containing a scheduled extinguishing agent.

When it comes to fire suppression equipment, facility managers should not take chances by hiring unlicensed technicians as these are safety critical devices and it is crucial they function correctly if there is a fire hazard in the building.

It should also be noted that insurance companies may decide to reject a claim for damages caused by fire if they discover that the company that installed, tested or serviced the facility's gaseous suppression system did not have appropriately licensed technicians, and the system malfunctioned, for example.

### **Some basic facts about gaseous suppression systems in facilities:**

Gaseous fire suppression systems using scheduled extinguishing agents are widely distributed in commercial and industrial buildings across Australia. These systems can be used to protect facilities such as:

- data centres in online businesses and elsewhere
- electrical switch and battery rooms
- telecommunications facilities
- medical apparatus rooms in hospitals
- chemical and physics laboratories
- libraries and archives.



### Tips to help facility managers properly manage gaseous suppression systems:

- Use logbooks to record all maintenance activity.
- Ensure proper documentation to provide a full life-cycle history for a particular gaseous fire suppression system. Not only will all maintenance activity be recorded, but the logbooks will also provide a historical record of the licence number of the technicians servicing the system.
- Keep up regular servicing and maintenance of gaseous fire suppression systems. This will ensure that the systems are fully functional in the event of a fire and will ensure the safety of those working in the area.

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The national Fire Protection Industry Permit Scheme is prescribed under the Commonwealth's Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995. Fire Protection Association Australia (FPA Australia) administers the scheme on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment.