



# QUESTIONS

## General Facts

### **What is the role of the Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board?**

The Fire Protection Industry (ODS & SGG) Board (the Board) appointed by the Minister for the Environment and Energy, in partnership with the fire protection industry, administers the fire protection division of the [Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Regulations 1995](#) (the Regulations) on behalf of the Australian Government.

The Board is responsible for the administration of the fire protection industry permit scheme and can grant Extinguishing Agent Handling Licences, Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisations and Halon Special Permits. The Board's functions include:

- Identify, promote and support industry 'best practice' activities throughout the fire protection industry;
- Manage a permit and licensing system to ensure applicants meet minimum standards of competency prior to granting of Extinguishing Agent Handling Licences (EAHLs);
- Implement effective communication and consultation with the fire protection industry to educate and encourage regulatory compliance; and
- Develop and distribute ozone depleting substance and synthetic greenhouse gas (ODS & SGG) learning and assessment resources to support those working in the fire protection industry.

### **What is the role of *the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989 (the Act)* and *the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995 (the Regulations)*?**

The Act and the Regulations regulate the handling of ozone depleting substances (ODS) and synthetic greenhouse gases (SGG). This legislation is in place to:

- promote the responsible management of harmful gases so as to minimise their impact on the environment;
- provide controls on the manufacture, import, export and use of ODS and SGG's;
- provide controls on the handling, use, acquisition, storage and disposal of scheduled substances;
- encourage industry to replace ozone depleting substances; and
- ensure Australia meets its international obligations under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



### **What are scheduled extinguishing agents?**

The specific ODS and SGG's that are regulated by the legislation are those listed as 'scheduled substances' to the Act. Scheduled extinguishing agents are ODS and SGG's that can damage the earth's ozone layer and add significantly to the greenhouse effect and global warming.

Scheduled extinguishing agents used in the fire protection industry include:

- Halon 1301
- Halon 1211
- FM-200
- NAF P-III
- NAF S-III

To see a full list of the scheduled extinguishing agents and read more about the common use of ODS and SGG extinguishing agents used in the fire protection industry, please view the following: [Factsheet: Scheduled Agents used in Fire Protection](#).

### **What are the different licences and permits available under the fire protection industry permit scheme: Extinguishing Agent Handling Licence, Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisation and Halon Special Permit?**

An Extinguishing Agent Handling Licence (EAHL) is a technician level permit that allows the holder (the technician) to handle ODS and SGG extinguishing agents while undertaking work permitted by the relevant licence held. The Board grants three types of licences. They are:

- [EAHL – Qualified licence](#)
- [EAHL – Experienced Persons Licence](#) ; and
- [Extinguishing Agent Trainee Licence](#).

An [Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisation \(EATA\)](#) allows a person or business to acquire, possess, distribute and dispose of scheduled extinguishing agents.

A [Halon Special Permit \(HSP\)](#) allows a person or business to possess halon for use in fire protection equipment. Anyone possessing halon must have a current HSP.

### **Once I apply for a licence, authorisation or permit, how long does it take my application to be processed?**

Applications may take up to 30 days to process; however, the Board will do its best to process all applications as efficiently as possible.

### **Once an Extinguishing Agent Handling Licence, Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisation or Halon Special Permit is granted, does it expire?**

Yes, all licences and permits granted by the Board are valid for a specific duration. At the time of granting the licence, you will be notified of the period of your licence.

An EATA is valid for a period of up to 24 months.

An EAHL – Qualified Person's licence is valid for a period of up to 24 months.



An EAHL – Experienced Persons, Extinguishing Agent Trainee Licence and a Halon Special Permit is valid for a period of up to 12 months.

Provided you have advised the Board of any subsequent change of address/email address, you will receive a notification advising you of the upcoming expiry of your licence or permit. At that time, you can reapply for your new licence, authorisation or permit. If you choose not to renew your licence, it will automatically be deactivated. If you wish to renew your licence, please contact the Board on (03) 8892 3131 or email [ozone@fpib.com.au](mailto:ozone@fpib.com.au)

### **What is halon and the role of the National Halon Bank?**

Halons are firefighting agents that were introduced into Australia in the early 1970s. They quickly replaced many previously accepted firefighting products because of their superior firefighting characteristics and ease of use.

Halons are fully halogenated chemicals that have relatively long lifetimes in the atmosphere. They are broken down in the stratosphere releasing reactive bromine that is extremely damaging to ozone. Reactions involving bromine are estimated to be responsible for 25 per cent of the chemical destruction of ozone over Antarctica and 50 per cent over the Arctic. The ozone depleting potential of halons is 10 times greater than that of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). As such, halons are a very aggressive ozone-depleting chemical. One kilogram of halon 1211 can destroy 50 tonnes of ozone.

Since 1994, halon production has been discontinued after scientific evidence suggested that halon contributed to the depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer. Australia stopped importing halon at the end of 1992.

Australia continues to be a world leader in the phase out of ozone depleting substances and has made significant advances in the responsible management of halon.

In 1993, the Australian Government established the National Halon Bank to store decommissioned halon for destruction or reclamation to meet essential uses until an alternative is found for current uses.

The National Halon Bank operates a free call service to advise you on disposal of halon. Call 1800 658 084 to arrange for the disposal of any unwanted halon product.

For more information about the National Halon Bank, please visit the Department of Environment and Energy's website <http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone/national-halon-bank>

### **How do I contact the Fire Protection Industry Board if I need to update my details?**

If you wish to contact the Board about changing your details, please call (03) 8892 3131 and a Licensing Coordinator will assist.



## Extinguishing Agent Handling Licence (EAHL)

### **Who needs an EAHL?**

Any person who handles a scheduled extinguishing agent must hold an EAHL. To view a list of scheduled extinguishing agents used in the fire protection industry [click here](#).

Handling a scheduled extinguishing agent means doing anything with the agent that carries the risk of emission, including:

- recovering or decanting the agent; or
- installing, commissioning, servicing or maintaining fire protection equipment; or
- decommissioning or disposing of fire protection equipment where a scheduled extinguishing agent is present.

The Board grants three key types of EAHL licences including:

- EAHL – Qualified Persons Licence (Entitlement 1-6): applicants must meet licence application requirements and have achieved the units of competency needed for the relevant licence.
- EAHL – Experienced Persons Licence (Entitlement 6): allows experienced technicians to install commission and decommission a fire detection and alarm system, including any remote operation panel, and actuation and control system that interfaces with or forms part of a gaseous fire extinguishing system. It allows experienced technicians to continue to work while their industry experience is assessed and units of competencies undertaken to attain an EAHL - Qualified Persons.
- Extinguishing Agent Trainee Licence (Entitlement 1-6): allows trainees to handle scheduled extinguishing agents. The trainee must only handle extinguishing agents while being supervised by the holder of an equivalent EAHL - Qualified Persons or EAHL - Experienced Persons Licence.

These licences allow the handling of scheduled extinguishing agents in certain circumstances. There are six entitlement types for each of the three licences, / OR which apply to all three licences that can be granted to applicants to undertake specific activities. Depending on the type of installation work, maintenance or service activity being undertaken a technician may need to hold more than one type of entitlement.

To view entitlement types and the handling practices and units of competency, please [click here](#).

To apply for an EAHL you must complete the application form, please [click here](#).

If you are not certain which EAHL you must hold, contact the Board on (03) 8892 3131 for further information and assistance.

### **If I have worked for many years with scheduled extinguishing agents, do I still need an EAHL?**

Yes, under the regulations it is an offence of strict liability to handle scheduled extinguishing agents without the appropriate licence. Irrespective of your experience in the fire protection industry and/or experience with scheduled extinguishing agents, you must hold a relevant EAHL to handle scheduled agents.



**If I need to undertake training to obtain an EAHL – Qualified Persons Licence, who do I contact?**

Technicians who are applying for an EAHL – Qualified Persons Licence (Entitlements 1- 6) please contact a registered training organisation (RTO). [Click here](#) for further information.

If you are unsure if you need to undertake training and / or assessment to obtain an EAHL, contact the Board (03) 8892 3131 and a Licensing Coordinator will assist.

## Extinguishing Agent Trading Authorisation (EATA)

**Who needs an EATA?**

Any person or business acquiring, possessing, distributing and/or disposing of scheduled extinguishing agents must hold an EATA. An EATA is required to undertake the following activities:

- buy/sell/possess agent in bulk, or
- fill/recover agent

To apply for an EATA, a person or business must have a current EAHL holder within their business. To apply for an EATA you must complete the application form please [click here](#).

**What is a Risk Management Plan (RMP)?**

A RMP is required to identify potential risks, which could result in the emission of scheduled extinguishing agents to the atmosphere and outline measures to minimise the possibility of those risks occurring.

Applications for an EATA and /or HSP must include a RMP. This plan should be prepared in accordance with *AS/NZS ISO 3100: 2009 Risk Management – Principles and guidelines* and should feature information about how the following matters will be addressed, including:

- emission from leaks, or the failure of, storage containers;
- damage by intruders;
- the transfer of extinguishing agents from leaking storage containers; and
- how the premises will be operated in a way that is consistent with Australia's obligations under the Montreal Protocol.

It is important that EATA applicants understand what is required in a RMP as insufficient information may result in an application not being approved. For further information, please download a copy of the [Ozone Depleting Substances & Synthetic Greenhouse Gases \(ODD & SGG\) Good Practice Guide](#).

The Board has provided a template RMP for assistance, to view please [click here](#).



## Halon Special Permit (HSP)

### **Who needs a Halon Special Permit (HSP)?**

Any person or company possessing halon, which is for use in fire protection equipment, must hold a HSP. An HSP is not needed for equipment used by the Defence Force, or equipment that is carried or installed in an aircraft in an enclosed space containing machinery.

To apply for a HSP you must complete the application form. [Click here](#) to download an application form.

### **Do I need a HSP if I only keep a small amount of halon?**

Under the regulations, it is an offence of strict liability to possess halon without the appropriate permit. You must hold a HSP to possess any amount of halon.

### **How do I dispose of Halon?**

The National Halon Bank operates a free call service to advise you on disposal of halon. Call 1800 658 084 to arrange for the disposal of any unwanted halon product.

Halon may also be disposed of at most metropolitan fire stations and by the fire protection company that services your fire systems. The Government provides a free service for the public and small business to dispose of halon.

To check if you or your company meets the criteria for an exemption from disposal fees and charges, please visit [www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone/halon/halon-disposal](http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone/halon/halon-disposal) and refer to the [Halon Collection Point Deposit Form](#).

