



A GROWING INTEREST IN AMMONIA HAS LED TO THE CREATION OF A FULL DAY AMMONIA SAFETY AWARENESS AND TRAINING FORUM.

Ammonia safety forum gets top marks

THE INAUGURAL EVENT which was held in Sydney recently was attended by more than 50 participants.

Organised by private RTO, the Superior Training Centre and leading industrial and commercial refrigeration specialists, Tri Tech Refrigeration, the course provides participants with a nationally recognised certificate.

Attendees sit for a test at the end of the day and those that pass receive a Statement of Attainment.

More than 85 per cent of attendees at the training forum passed the test and were certified.

The course, which covers occupational health and safety issues as well as new standards, was presented by former TAFE teacher and Tri Tech engineer, Peter McQueen.

Tri Tech Refrigeration director, Greg Atkinson, said interest in ammonia is growing especially from end users.

"It is spoken about a lot more today with the phasedown of HFCs," he said.

"The phasedown has provided industry with a window of opportunity.

"Change doesn't have to be a scary nightmare. It's actually a chance for technicians to upskill and make a higher income in a safe and environmentally responsible way.

"It's also a chance for industry to not only survive but flourish over the next decade."

Atkinson's optimism was shared by many of the attendees who talked about embracing change.

"The aim of the course is to get participants more comfortable with ammonia and to try to remove a lot of the fears that arise from being uninformed," he said.

"Safety doesn't have to be a barrier to trade or innovation, with the right information it can open up new markets and opportunities."

INTEREST IN AMMONIA GROWING WORLDWIDE

Interest in ammonia isn't just growing locally, it is on the rise worldwide.

International ammonia expert, Dr Dermot Cotter of Star Technical Solutions, said end users are the main beneficiaries of this trend.

"The global trend towards using natural refrigerants is growing and this holds great opportunities for end-users," Cotter said.

"Innovative alternatives with extremely high efficiencies such as low charge ammonia refrigeration technology are now emerging and making it feasible to use ammonia, a highly efficient, non-patented refrigerant with zero GWP, in a variety of industrial and commercial applications- which had never been thought possible before.


"Fortunately, the growth in ammonia refrigeration systems brings improved technical guidelines and safety regulations which everyone needs to be aware of.

"Good practices need to be followed to minimise the risk of an ammonia release this includes protocols which should be in place for mechanical integrity inspections."




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When the course was created Atkinson said it was important to ensure that it wasn't just another refrigerant talkfest.

"A good teacher inspires and that's what the industry needs so we got the experts together with the Superior Training Centre, who are passionate about training, and tried to make the forum informative but also fun and rewarding," Atkinson said.

Superior Training Centre director, Richard Bencic, said the course content was direct and to the point.

"What I loved most about this training forum was its honesty, there was no marketing fluff or fake, unnecessary information," he said.

"It got the point and that's where it stayed, there was no time-wasting."

Atkinson said he is working hard to keep course costs to an absolute minimum.

"I have been in the industry a long time and it has been good to me so its important to give back," he said.

"We are in the midst of an era of change and progress but we are not going to move forward if everyone just sits on their hands and waits for everyone else to do the heavy lifting."

Industrial fire and risk engineering company, Blackie Mendham Pty Ltd (BMPL), also supported the forum.

BMPL technical director, Steve Sylvester, said changing a refrigeration or air conditioning system to natural refrigerants raises particular hazards and risks that must, by law, be identified and controlled within the system design.

"We can provide certified hazardous area solutions for standard or novel installations," he said. ✨

TWO NEW STANDARDS PROPOSED

International Institute of Ammonia Refrigeration (IAR) is the world's leading advocate for the safe,

reliable and efficient use of ammonia and other natural refrigerants.

With more than 2,500 members the IAR is actively involved in the development of standards. For example, the IAR recently proposed two new standards.

The working title for IAR 6 is Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance of Safe Closed-Circuit Ammonia Refrigeration Systems

This proposed standard specifies minimum criteria for inspection, testing, and maintenance of closed-circuit ammonia mechanical refrigeration systems, including the ammonia side of a cascade refrigeration system.

The working title for IAR 9 is the Recognized and Generally Accepted Good Engineering Practices (RAGAGEP) for Existing Closed-Circuit Ammonia Refrigeration Systems

This proposed standard will help companies ascertain whether or not their existing systems should be updated to reflect new requirements from newly published and revised standards.

This standard provides a method of evaluating existing systems against requirements that should apply to all closed-circuit ammonia refrigeration systems regardless of age and will help determine what can or can't be "grandfathered" in regard to system design.



TOP AND THIS IMAGE: Course organisers believe the HFC phasedown has provided industry with a window of opportunity.