



News International Finds the Right Solution for Refrigerant Removal with A-Gas

When News International decided to sell its famous Wapping printing site for re-development after moving to neighbouring Thomas More Square, the company took a responsible approach in dealing with the HCFC and HFC refrigerants left in its air handling plant, chillers and air conditioning systems and called in the environmental services team from A-Gas (UK) Limited.

Printing newspapers requires a controlled environment and the Wapping site had extensive air handling plant and chillers to ensure the correct temperatures and humidity for the print process as well as comfort cooling for employees. But with much of the printing now contracted and redundant air handling plant and chillers, the company decided to take a proactive approach in line with its environmental ethos and ensure the safe removal of over 5000 kilos of refrigerant before the site was re-developed by its new owners.

The plant and equipment comprised multi-vendor systems using various HFC and HCFC refrigerants. With virgin HCFC refrigerants including R22 banned throughout Europe from January 1st 2010, the obvious solution was incineration.

However, News International contacted A-Gas (UK) Ltd aware that the company offered an Environmental Service division, to explore alternatives that had less environmental impact.

As one of the largest refrigerant providers in the UK, A-Gas has extensive resources that include a fractional distillation plant and the technical expertise to advise on the de-commissioning and removing refrigerant safely whilst conforming to the latest legislation.



Just some of the News International equipment



A-Gas' Refrigerant Separation Facility

Following an inspection, strategies were presented to News International who decided with A-Gas' help that the optimum solution would be to recover rather than destroy the refrigerants and where possible recycle if the material was not contaminated.

News International was well aware of the refrigerant legislation but felt it had a duty of care to sell the site as a refrigerant "clean building,"

The company also felt that it was far better environmentally and commercially, not to pay for material to be destroyed when A-Gas via its Environmental Services could recycle the material.

A-Gas is one of the few refrigerant suppliers that can offer a complete environmental service at the heart of which is its fractional distillation technology that enables A-Gas to separate refrigerant material, even cocktail mixtures of refrigerant and reclaim material that would otherwise be sent for incineration.



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A-Gas had to act swiftly following acceptance of its survey and had to complete the decanting of refrigerants within a two week time frame before the building was finally handed over to the new owners.

With the chillers in a roof top plant room some six levels up; cranes were required, along with a selection of large and small recovery cylinders to accept the waste gas. Other refrigeration and air conditioning units around the site required cylinders to be placed strategically around the building. Over the two week period A-Gas decanted some 5,000 kilos of refrigerant which included R22, R134a, R410a, R407c and R422D.



News International roof top

Not only did A-Gas decant more material than anticipated, it was of a high enough purity to enable A-Gas to reclaim much of the material. The added bonus was that after recovering the costs of degassing the systems and transporting the cylinders, News International was delighted to be presented with a cheque for a substantial sum from A-Gas for the material it managed to re-process.



A-Gas Decant Facilities

“Wherever possible we encourage end users to avoid sending refrigerant for destruction. Our Environmental Services were able to offer a solution that met News International’s environmental criteria and a guarantee that recovered material would be properly reclaimed and by a correctly regulated and licensed waste facility,” says John Ormerod, A-Gas (UK) Ltd.

“A-Gas was very professional, produced an agreed schedule of works and did an excellent job,” commented News International.

“News International is highly committed to its environmental obligations and was the first major newspaper group to become carbon neutral. It is important to the company that its environmental ethos influences its supply chain. By working closely with A-Gas (UK) Ltd News International was able to reach a responsible solution that had a positive but minimal environmental impact.”