

SNAP list of acceptable ODS substitutes updated

The United States' Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has added new ODS substitutes acceptable in the refrigeration and foam sectors, under its Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) programme. Furan (C₄F₈O) can be used as a substitute for CFC-114 in retrofits of existing uranium isotope separation processing equipment. Furan belongs to the perfluorocarbon (PFC) family and though it does not contribute to stratospheric ozone depletion, it has a high global warming potential (GWP) as well as a long atmospheric lifetime. Several PFCs have already been listed as acceptable replacements for CFC-114 in uranium isotope separation processing. According to EPA, PFCs remain the only viable alternatives to CFC-114 that have been identified in this end-use. Generally, PFCs offer high dielectric resistance, non-corrosivity, thermal stability, materials compatibility, chemical inertness, low toxicity and non-inflammability.

EPA has also determined that saturated light hydrocarbons C3-C6 are acceptable as a substitute for HCFC-141b in all foam end-uses, except as HCFC replacements in spray foam applications. This step does not alter previous decisions to list specific hydrocarbon blowing agents as acceptable in spray foam applications. The acceptability of hydrocarbons as HCFC-141b replacements in spray foam applications will be determined on a product-by-product basis until standard industry practices are established. Hydrocarbon blowing agents have zero-ODP, low GWP and are low in toxicity. However, these agents are inflammable and should be handled with proper precautions. (Website: <http://www.thompson.com/tpg/enviro/ozon/ozonmay.html>)