

## F-Gas Training gives Engineers an Edge

*As Engineers across the country head back to the classroom, **ACR Today** reports on the experience from one of the first courses*

The first wave of training under the new F-Gas requirements is now underway across the country. Feedback so far from early courses has been extremely positive, with Engineers who have successfully passed through the intensive Training and Assessment process enthusiastically endorsing the new approach.

Kelvin Kelly, one of Business Edge Training Instructors, says: “Some Engineers may have been a little nervous at the start. However, we have been very impressed by how quickly people rise to the challenge. The Candidates enjoyed the process of refreshing their knowledge, learning new skills and having an opportunity to demonstrate their skills for the Assessment process.”

He added: “The practical tests are far more comprehensive than previously required, and now include pipe work and brazing skills. However, Candidates recognise the importance of this approach and have been keen to show what they can do. It has been a very positive start.”

There were seven Candidates on the company’s first F-Gas Training Course. All passed, and they are now proud holders of the new F-Gas Certificate of Competence.

The company offers the ConstructionSkills route to F-Gas Assessment, which offers the advantage that it already has an established practical skills course on Pipe Work and Brazing. Candidates are encouraged to attend this if they are lacking in confidence in this area.

The first Candidates to pass through Business Edge's course were from both large and small companies, and included Managers as well as Field Engineers. Given the high level of technical knowledge and practical competence among the group, were there any sticking points in the syllabus that required more detailed attention?

Mike Creamer, Business Edge MD: "The area that posed most difficulty was work on Pressure-Enthalpy Charts. These are obviously an important tool, provided you know how to use them, as they contain a great deal of important information regarding the operation and condition of a refrigeration system".

"However, the truth is that they are not everyone's cup of tea, and for some Candidates this was their first exposure to the fundamentals and practical use of the Charts. With clear explanation, and helpful discussion among the group, the penny soon dropped – and Pressure-Enthalpy charts were a mystery no more! Fortunately for Business Edge, we have been training in this particularly discipline since the company originally started in 1990".

A key part of the course involved the use of a bespoke Training Rig, specially designed by Business Edge Ltd in conjunction with Bitzer UK and utilises a Bitzer Octagon reciprocating compressor,

and includes a condenser, receiver and suction line accumulator, coupled to a Friga-Bohn evaporator. This compressor is exceptionally quiet and thus aids our F-Gas Training immensely.

The unit provides a complete solution for the F-Gas Course. It enables the Instructor to set up a number of system fault conditions, which can then be used to demonstrate principles and test the Candidates' knowledge.

For example, the Instructor can vary the refrigerant charge, and change the fan speed on the condenser or evaporator, to simulate system problems. It is designed and built in several sections, enabling the Instructor to ask Candidates to change pipe work runs, or remove and replace the key system components.

Mike Creamer: "It is a highly effective piece of kit, and enables our Instructors to demonstrate the practical effects of theoretical principles quickly and compellingly. There is usually a large gap between the academic underpinning and the nuts and bolts of the real world, and this Rig bridges this brilliantly. It makes the theory come to life."

Business Edge has a growing list of Engineers lined up to attend forthcoming F-Gas Courses, which it is holding at centres in Bristol, Milton Keynes and Portsmouth. Courses are scheduled as follows:

11/12/13 March – Portsmouth

11/12/13 March – Milton Keynes

24/25/26 March – Milton Keynes

15/16/17 April – Waterlooville - Portsmouth

Mike says: “From our experience thus far, we believe Engineers will find the F-Gas Course an entirely positive experience. People do like to brush up their skills; it makes them better Engineers and will increase the satisfaction they get from their job.

“It is also a great opportunity to hone existing skills, increase technical knowledge and the level of professionalism and most people enjoy a challenge, especially in a subject they enjoy.”

For more details contact 02392 230 007

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