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SEA-FIRE EUROPE TO CEASE DISTRIBUTION OF HFC-BASED PRODUCTS

Sea-Fire Europe announced it is ceasing distribution of fire suppression equipment using HFC-based (hydrofluorocarbon) agents. The decision is two-fold. It proactively counters supply issues that are arising from the mandated phase-down of HFCs in Europe. Sea-Fire also strongly believes that it is the responsible action to take, given the adverse impact they have on the environment.

HFCs are a group of man-made gaseous agents frequently used in the fire suppression and HVAC industries. The most commonly used for fire suppression is HFC227, also known as FM-200. Persisting in the atmosphere for years, it is a greenhouse gas and contributes to global warming. As an example of its environmental impact, the discharge of an average-sized fire extinguisher system cylinder of HFC227 has the same CO₂ equivalent as driving a car 167,000 miles.

As an ongoing part of the original 1987 Montreal Protocol that dealt with the phase-out of Halon, regulations were put in place to reduce HFCs by means of a quota system. 2018 saw a reduction of 37% from a 2015 baseline with more reductions scheduled.

The phase-down will create HFC227 suppression agent shortages that will drive up prices. The forecast for Europe is for costs to double in the next 18 months. Additionally, the decreased availability will adversely affect the ability to service such systems.

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Sea-Fire Europe is poised with a proven alternative, 3M™ Novec™ 1230 fire suppression fluid. It is electrically non-conductive and non-corrosive, so it will not harm machinery or delicate electronic systems. With an almost negligible global warming potential, it does not form part of any proposed environmental phase-down. It has a low toxicity value, with a high factor of safety, so it's safe for human exposure.

Novec 1230 systems are already becoming less expensive than HFC227. Vessels that transition to Novec by the end of the year ensure costs remain fixed for a minimum of 12 months.

"Information on climate change tends to be confusing, often contradictory and seemingly endless," said Ernie Ellis, Sea-Fire Marine president. "But we're taking this first step in Europe because we know it's the right thing to do."

Sea-Fire Marine and Sea-Fire Europe are committed to protecting people and property at sea. It supplies state-of-the-art fire detection and suppression equipment used on commercial, naval and recreational vessels worldwide.

Contact Sea-Fire Marine, 9351-G Philadelphia Rd., Baltimore, MD 21237. 410-687-5500. www.sea-fire.com.

Editor's note: Ernie Ellis is available as a subject matter expert on this topic. If you are interested in setting up an interview, please contact news@martinflory.com. Sea-Fire will also be at IBEX in Tampa, Florida, Oct. 2-4, booth 19.