

**F-Gas Registration Ltd**

**Company Certification Scheme**

**Guidance Notes**

**2024**

**F-Gas Registration Company Certification Scheme Guidance Notes:**

These guidance notes set-out how businesses can apply for company certification and how applications are reviewed and processed.

It deals with the ongoing audit requirements and processes for businesses holding a company certificate and how any problems or issues such as non-conformities are handled.

It also covers dealing with appeals against the refusal of a new application or renewal of an application or the withdrawal or suspension of a company certificate.

**Contents: Page No**

**Introduction 3**

**Application Process and Certification** **Standards 3**

* Applications for Company Certification 4
* Outcome of the application 5
* Application process 5
* Certificate Renewal 6
* Application & Certificate Renewal Process 7

**Audit of Certified Businesses**

* Desk-top Audit 8
* On-Site Audit 8
* On-Site Risk based or compliant triggered Audit 9
* Non-compliance 9

**Complaints & Appeals Procedures**

* Complaints 10
* Appeals 10

**Further Information**  11

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**Introduction:**

F-Gas Registration Ltd (referred to in the rest of this booklet as FGR) has agreed with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) to operate as the Company Certification Body in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) under the following provisions EU Commission 303 (Stationary Refrigeration and Air Conditioning) equipment and 304 (Fire Sector Equipment) of 2008.

**Application Process and Certification Standards:**

In order for a company to obtain an F-Gas certificate the business must declare basic information about the business and prove that all the employed engineers who handle Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (F-Gas) are competent to carry out their work - i.e. that they have the necessary qualifications as set out on the following page. This is a self declaration scheme and must be signed by an authorised officer of the applicant business. The principle contact will be deemed to be the authorised officer of that applicant business for applications made online.

**Applications for Company Certification:**

As of 4th July 2010 all businesses working on Stationary Fire Protection Systems and Fixed Fire Extinguisher Systems containing F-Gases sector (referred to in the rest of this booklet as the Fire Sector) must hold a Stationary Equipment Qualification Company Certificate – referred to in the rest of this booklet as a Company Certificate.

Company Certificates are valid for One Calendar Year (01 Jan – 31Dec) after which the certificate must be renewed.

To apply for a Company Certificate businesses must provide the following information

(a) Basic information about the business CRO No – VAT No - Address Etc.

(b) A list of all employed engineers holding the appropriate stationary equipment qualification in handling F-Gases

Engineers who work in the Fire Sector and work on equipment and systems containing F-Gases must hold one of the following Qualifications:

1. Fetac 5S0110 Level 5 (Special Purpose Certificate) or
2. EPA Exchange F-Gas Certification for Technicians

Businesses must demonstrate the following: (a) they employ a sufficient number of in-scope employed engineers to cover the in-scope business activity. (b) Proof that all installation and maintenance tasks associated with the safe handling of F-Gases used in fixed Fire Protection and Extinguishing Systems along with the appropriate systems and handling procedures are in place and in use. (See the Fire Sector download on the home page)

As of 4th July 2011, all businesses working on Stationary Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Systems containing or could contain F-Gases (referred to in the rest of this booklet as the SRAC) must hold a Stationary Equipment Qualification Company Certificate – referred to in the rest of this booklet as a Company Certificate.

Company Certificates are valid for One Calendar Year (01 Jan – 31Dec) after which the certificate must be renewed.

To apply for a Company Certificate businesses must provide the following information

(a) Basic information about the business CRO No - Address – VAT no - Etc.

(b) A list of all employed engineers holding the appropriate stationary equipment qualification in handling F-Gases

Engineers who work in the SRAC Sector and work on equipment and systems containing F-Gases must hold one of the following Qualifications:

1. EPA Exchange Certificate (categories I – IV)
2. Category 1 QQI 5S0108 – 5N0104 - 5S21991 – 5S21697 Level 5 (Special Purpose Certificate)
3. Category 2 QQI 5N0103 – 5S21993 – 5S21995 Level 5 (Special Purpose Certificate.)
4. Category 3 QQI 5N0105 (Special Purpose Certificate.
5. Category 4 QQI 5N0102 (Special Purpose Certificate)
6. FAS Refrigeration Craft Certificate after 01 Jan 2014 (including phase 4 Safe Handling of Refrigerant)

Businesses must demonstrate the following: (a) they employ a sufficient number of in-scope employed engineers to cover the volume of its in-scope business activity. (b) Proof that the appropriate recovery systems and refrigerant handling procedures are in place and in use. (See the SRAC downloads on the home page)

**Application Process:**

The on-line applications are easy to follow, however if you need assistance, please contact the FGR Helpdesk by email of phone on 087 2501890

Certification fees and scheme information can be downloaded from the website or requested at [www.fgasregistration.ie](http://www.fgasregistration.ie) or by email [info@fgasregistration.ie](mailto:info@fgasregistration.ie) you are call the FGR Helpdesk on 01-8618207 or 087 2501890

Online applications and payment can be made on the FGR website [www.fgasregistration.ie](http://www.fgasregistration.ie)

Once we have received your completed application and certification fee, FGR will review the information received

**Outcome of the Application:**

Once the application has been reviewed and assessed, the Operations Manager will consider the application based on the information received to determine if the business meets the criteria for company certification. At this point the Operations Manager may look for further information or clarification from the applicant in order to process the application.

If the application is successful FGR will inform the business and add the new member to the FGR on-line public data base of registered businesses. The public listing of certified business can be viewed at [www.fgasregistration.ie](http://www.fgasregistration.ie) by name, county or alphabetic search. Successful applicants will also receive a Company Certificate showing the company name, category for which the company is certified to carryout work and the unique company registration number.

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by the Operations Manager and given the reason(s) why they have been unsuccessful and not met the certification criteria, they will also be given details of how to re-apply or appeal against the decision, should the wish to do so.

**Application Process:**

1. Register you interest on the FGR website – [www.fgasregistration.ie](http://www.fgasregistration.ie) **apply online**. Accept your business may be selected for a risk-based audit.
2. Complete either the online application or renewal certification form and pay the appropriate certification fee on our secure payment online system or post a cheque for the appropriate certification fee to FGR.
3. FGR reviews /considers your application or certification renewal
4. FGR notifies you that your business has been successful and meets the certification criteria and issues you a Company Certificate
5. Your business details are uploaded to our website public listing
6. FGR informs you that your application or renewal is pending and requests further information or clarifies issues with your application / renewal
7. FGR notifies you that your application or certification renewal has been unsuccessful. The reasons for the unsuccessful application / certification renewal along with details of how to appeal the decision
8. Audits are carried out on-site following a risk based desk-top audit or third party complaint

**Certificate Renewal**

On-line renewals and payment can be made on the FGR website at [www.fgasregistration.ie](http://www.fgasregistration.ie) , renewal fees are listed on the FGR website.

Sixty days prior to certification expiry date (1st November), businesses will be reminded by email to renew their certification once renewed the reminder automatically stops: Businesses will be sent a link to the FGR website where they will be given access to their original application, there they can amend their application and renew their certificate. Reminders will also be sent every 7 days after 1st November until it is renewed, after the 31st of December their certificate will be suspended (unless previously renewed).

Early renewal is accepted and will commence on the 1st of November each Year.

Details of the application process and how the scheme operates are shown on the next page

**FGR Application and Certification renewal Process Flowchart:**

Contact us on the FGR website – [www.fgasregistration.ie](http://www.fgasregistration.ie) **apply on-line**

**Company Certificates must be renewed annually.** You will receive notification that you certificate is about to expire on 1st November and every 7 days after to expiry: **Your certificate will be suspended on 1st January** (unless you have previously renewed your certificate)

Compliance Audits are carried out annually on a random selection of the registered businesses. These are both Desk-top and Site Visits

FGR reviews and advises why your application or certification renewal is pending. Reason more information is required or there are issues with your application

**FGR informs you that your application or certification renewal has been unsuccessful. And he reasons for the unsuccessful application along with details of how to appeal the decision**

FGR informs you that your application has been successful and issues your business with a Company Certificate. Your Business information is posted on the FGR website public listing

Complete the following:

1. **On-line Application**
2. Renewal Application
3. Submit with the appropriate certification fee to FGR

FGR reviews your application for Company certification or renewal of certificate

**Ongoing Audit of Certificated Businesses:**

Businesses that hold an F-Gas Company Certificate may be subjected to a risk-based desk-top and / or an on-site audit. Businesses are selected at random for either of the audits.

Businesses may also be selected for an audit following a third party complaint.

The purposes of the audits are to:

1. Further validate and authenticate the information provided by the certificated business on their application form.
2. Ensure that the certification standards are maintained

FGR will request as a minimum, the following information detailed below in order to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the selected business at the time of application. It’s important to update your company details annually.

**Desk-top Audits:**

FGR will seek the following:

1. Information to verify that there are qualified SRAC and Fire Sector engineers employed in sufficient numbers to cover the activities referred to in Article 2.2 of Commission Regulation 303/2008 or 304/2008. Installation, maintenance or servicing or SRAC, Heat-pump equipment or Stationary Fire Protection and Extinguishing equipment
2. Check the validity of those qualifications with the relevant awarding body.
3. Request information to verify that the necessary equipment, tools, and procedures are in place and available to qualified employee(s) engaged in activities for which a Company Certificate is issued.

**On-site Audits:**

Where businesses are selected for an on-site audit, they will be contacted directly by the appointed auditor, who will arrange a time and date for the audit to take place. In all cases the appointed auditor will be appropriately qualified, if the time and date cannot be agreed to suit other audits in the area there will be a charge for returning to carry out the audit on its own.

The audit will take place at the businesses premises and will take between 1 and 2 hours depending on the size of the business and the number of engineers employed.

The following will be required during the audit:

1. Inspection of all engineers equipment & tools
2. Copy of all engineers qualifications
3. Inspection of Recovery Unit(s) and Vacuum Pump(s) SRAC companies Only
4. Inspection of Equipment pertaining to Fire Sector Companies
5. Copy of Company F-Gas Certificate
6. List of Sub Contractors used by the business who carry out works on behalf of the business pertaining to F-Gas Regulations

Any non-conformity found during the audit will be required to be dealt with effectively and in a timely manner as set out in the Non-compliance Section.

Some aspects of the audit may be covered by other certification schemes, to which the certificated businesses may already be accredited. Any such accreditation will not grant exemption from the provisions of FGR’s certification requirements but the auditor will take such schemes into account when carrying out the audit.

**On-site Risk Based or Third Party complaint Triggered Audit:**

FGR will require the following:

1. FGR will obtain evidence to confirm the accuracy of information requested by the desk-top audit or third party complaint
2. FGR will notify the certificated business of the results of the audit in writing
3. Where the business is found to be non-complaint FGR will advise the business of the non-conformity and the actions required to be taken by the business to become fully complaint.
4. FGR and the business will agreed on a time frame to carry out and rectify the non-compliance issues

See also non-compliance section for further information.

**Non-compliance:**

In the event that FGR discovers any non-conformities either at the time of an application or renewal is verified or by an auditor during a desk-top or on-site audit, the business will be given a period of time to rectify the issue(s) so the business can achieve the necessary certification standard.

The time scale and arrangements for this process may vary depending on whether the issues or problems are deemed to be minor or major non-conformities.

In the case of minor non-conformities, where one or more minor issues have been identified, which are unlikely to affect the validity of the Certification, the business will be given a short period of time to correct them.

In the event one or more major non-conformities are identified, the business will be given a reasonable period of time to correct them. An appointed auditor will agree and document the points at issue and agree a timescale for the corrective action to be taken. During this period the business will maintain their certificated status with FGR.

Major non-conformities include but are not restricted to:

1. Deliberately misleading or false information being supplied to FGR
2. A failure to meet or maintain the certification Standards
3. Failure to comply with the FGR terms and conditions

Should the non-conformities arising for the on-site visit remain unresolved within the agreed period of time to the satisfaction of the auditor the matter will then be referred to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the body tasked with enforcement of the F-Gas Regulations in the Republic of Ireland

In this event, the business will have their company certificate suspended or withdrawn and given the reason(s). They will also be given details of how to appeal this decision, should they wish to do so.

For the business to regain company certification with FGR they must make a new application and pay the appropriate fees.

**Appeals and complaints procedures:**

**Appeals:**

A right of appeal is available when a business is refused company certification or advised that certification has been suspended or withdrawn.

The Operations Manager will initially obtain the information from the parties involved. The appeal is then referred to the FGR Appeals Committee. The committee will consider (a) the grounds for appeal (b) why the previous decision was made (c) any additional information that may since have become available.

The committee will notify the individual who made the appeal and the Board of F-Gas Registration Ltd on the outcome of its deliberations. Where the outcome of the appeal is unsuccessful, the individual will be given the reason(s) why the appeal has failed. The individual will also be given details of how to appeal against the decision to an arbitrator is they so wish.

**Complaints:**

Complaints may be received from any source, these may originate for example from: (a) members of the public (b) other certified businesses (c) insurance companies (d) professional bodies (e) others.

The Operations Manager will initially investigate the complaint by obtaining comments from all parties involved. All complaints are referred to FGR’s Appeals Committee and the Board of FGR Ltd is also informed.

The committee will consider the seriousness of the compliant about the business in question. It will look at all information relevant to the complaint; including whether there have been any previous complaints. The committee will notify the Board of F-Gas Registration Ltd of the outcome of its deliberations.

A serious compliant is where there is evidence of:

1. A deliberate disregards of the requirements of FGR’s certification standards
2. Deliberate misleading or false information being given to FGR
3. Failure to comply with FGR’s Terms & Conditions

If the complaint is about a business and it’s upheld, FGR will notify the certified business and try to resolve the problem with the business in an effective and timely manner. Failure to resolve the complaint, particularly if it is a serious complaint, may result in the businesses certification being suspended or withdrawn by the EPA who will act as the policing / enforcement body for this scheme. Should this happen the business will be given details of how to re-apply or appeal against the decision, should they wish to do so.

The Board of F-Gas Registration Ltd will be informed of the EPA’s decision.

If the complaint is about FGR and it is upheld, then the Appeals Committee will notify the Board of F-Gas Registration Ltd of the complaint. It will also recommend the action that is to be taken to resolve the situation and to avoid a similar occurrence in the future. The individual or body that made the complaint will be advised of the Appeals Committee’s decision and the action being taken.

***Appendix 1***

**Further Information:**

**Websites and other useful contacts**

FGR – [www.fgasregistration.ie](http://www.fgasregistration.ie)

DECGL – [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)

EPA - [www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)

EPA – [www.ozone.ie](http://www.ozone.ie)

EPA – [www.fgases.ie](http://www.fgases.ie)

Institute of Refrigeration Ireland (IRI) – [www.instituteofrefrigerationireland.ie](http://www.instituteofrefrigerationireland.ie)