

50 YEARS OF THE COUNCIL OF GAS DETECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING (COGDEM)



EU Roundtable on CO (2018)

THE EARLY YEARS

In 1974 the British Standards Institute held a meeting at Hemel Hempstead, inviting most of the manufacturers of flammable gas detection equipment together with BASEEFA and SIRA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a draft document titled “Technical requirements for Automatic Combustible Gas Alarms”. During the meeting a representative of BSI commented that it was a pity that the industry did not speak with one voice. This triggered discussions amongst the manufacturers.

On 11 December 1974 a meeting was held at the offices of Becorit in Nottingham at which it was resolved to form The Council of Gas Detection Equipment Manufacturers. The founder members were International Gas Detectors, Becorit (G.B.), Detection Instruments, Draeger Safety, Electrical Remote Control Co., Neotronics and Teather Inter-Continental Gas Detection (U.K.). Tom Bird of I.G.D. was elected Chairman and J. Farrow of Becorit as Vice Chairman. Rules of Membership were agreed and CoGDEM was launched.

In 1975 CoGDEM increased its membership by a further two companies – E.E.V. and G.M.I. However Becorit, having by now acquired I.G.D., stood down leaving the total membership at seven and meetings were held in rooms at the National Liberal Club in central London. Later on, meetings were moved to the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In early 1977 Eric Jones was appointed the second Chairman, and Becorit, which subsequently became part of N.E.I, had a comparatively large office in Nottingham which included a hospitality suite. The first CoGDEM A.G.M. was held at these offices.

Responding, Expanding

By 1982 the membership had risen to fourteen. The original rules restricted membership to manufacturers but were modified to include anyone “active in the business of gas detection”, and a second class of membership, Associate Member, was introduced.

From the beginning the objective of CoGDEM was to be represented on any British Standards Institute committee that might be involved in gas detection. The Council obtained representation on BSI committee GSE/29 (now EXL/31/1) which in due course created BS 6020. Soon further standards work commenced for toxic gas and domestic flammable gas detectors. In addition to BSI committees, the Council has also been well represented on ISO, CEN and CENELEC committees. Despite all of the activities and the endless hours spent in committee meetings it is of interest to note that the LEL (lower



CEN264 WG42 Air Quality Standards Committee (2023)

explosive limit) of methane is still not agreed.

In 1995 CoGDEM was altered from the original name in which ‘EM stood for Equipment Manufacturers to Environmental Monitoring, extending its scope of activities.

Over the last 30 years CoGDEM has grown to more than 50 members, with an office in Hitchin, recently moved to Henlow in Bedfordshire. As required, more members have stepped forward

to be Chairman, including Julian Iredale, Jim Sherriff and now Dr. John Saffell. Leigh Greenham was an active secretary for many years, with Dave Curtis and now Andy Curtis, along with Samantha Harvey ensuring that the administration and accounts run smoothly.

A new sub-committee was formed in 1995, focusing on Domestic CO. For almost 30 years this group has lobbied MPs, supported CO awareness programs and even mans the CO Helpline. CoGDEM is the go-to association for domestic CO safety and is an active member of the committee revising EN 50292, the performance standard for domestic CO alarms.

Recognizing that domestic CO alarms are not the only residential gas safety issue, the subcommittee also includes flue gas safety, ensuring that boiler inspections in the home are performed with reliable, traceable flue gas analysers. Tom Bird helped draft BS7927, the standard for FGAs which eventually became EN50379. CoGDEM was also instrumental in developing BS7967 with the boiler industry then TB143, a domestic boiler commissioning procedure required by HSE following CO poisoning incidents caused by engineers. CoGDEM is also working on the updates for BS EN 50291 and 50292, the performance standards for domestic CO alarms.

Shortly after and to reflect the importance of awareness and influencing industrial safety legislation, a further sub-committee, the Industrial Sub-Group was formed. This group focuses on ensuring safety, compliance and innovation in gas monitoring technologies, addressing key challenges faced in hazardous environments. It actively collaborates with manufacturers, end-users and regulatory bodies to effect industrial regulations and provide expert guidance. A recent update to EN 60079, a standard focused on explosion protection in hazardous areas, was supported by input from many CoGDEM members. In addition, the ISG maintains a highly detailed and up-to-date directory of all key industrial performance standards.

Brexit has set new challenges for industrial safety. Certificates held by EU and UK companies had to be revisited and the CE marking is now replaced with the UKCA marking. These difficulties impact on safety equipment throughout Europe, and

CoGDEM

The Council of Gas Detection and Environmental Monitoring



Leigh Greenham and Doug Longstaff at WWEM (2012)

CoGDEM members have ensured that this significant transition did not disrupt various industries or endanger workers. The CoGDEM website provides guidance on the use of the UKCA marking and we continue to work with Certification bodies and represent the UK on Standards committees to maintain performance and safety requirements.

CoGDEM has reached out to the continent, with CoGDEM EU working directly with other Trade Associations. CoGDEM EU, led by Jonathan Kane, encourages other countries to adopt better guidelines and practices to reduce CO incidents and fatalities and improve awareness of this deadly home hazard.

CoGDEM members have together published a Gas Detection Book, explaining best practice and helping users to monitor toxic and explosive gases; the CoGDEM protocol for determining the lifetime of toxic sensors and FAQs are available on the CoGDEM website.

Since the birth of CoGDEM the business of gas detection has matured and developed into a significant industry. From the safety requirements of offshore oil platforms to the Safety and Health at Work Act, from domestic gas detectors to complex infra-red open path detectors, U.K. manufacturers, certification authorities and research establishments have played a major worldwide role. CoGDEM, through its members or through representation on official bodies, has been active and continues to represent the UK in all these areas. We are especially proud of John Sonley, Ron Sinclair, Tony Banfield and Richard King- CoGDEM members who have and continue to chair, convene and lead committees that drive the standards that ensure a safe workplace.

CoGDEM members currently represent the UK on committees for gas detectors, hazard detection, road tunnels, ultrasonic leak detectors, flue gas analysers, ambient emission sources, gas cylinders, air quality monitor validation and various Ex committees. CoGDEM is also represented and actively participates in L/6/20 (UK EX forum), EXL/032 (Ex and IS gas detectors), GISG, BSi EH/2, IGEM and ASTM D22.



Certified domestic CO alarms from CoGDEM member companies

CoGDEM Today

CoGDEM continues to grow, driven by our members and a changing regulatory and certification landscape.

- The Hydrogen Special Interest Group keeps abreast of the latest needs and trends for hydrogen generation, transport, storage and use.
- PFAS future restrictions will affect all of us. CoGDEM submitted to the ECHA in 2023 a detailed request for derogation of the use of fluorinated polymers, critical components in the manufacture of the gas sensors used every day to protect lives.
- CoGDEM members are frequently global companies; we welcome members who are headquartered in North America, Japan and the rest of Europe.
- Responding to an emerging market. members who provide gas safety monitors are now pursuing air quality monitors with CoGDEM support.
- The Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directive has a direct impact on many of our members' products, in particular the efforts to remove metallic lead from sensing equipment. CoGDEM maintains a watching brief on this trend and endeavours to provide expert input to all interested parties as well as representing our members' interests.

Join Us

New members are always welcome as our activities and influence continue to grow. Join us to network with like-minded individuals– we hold three meetings annually, of which one is always face to face- a great opportunity to keep up to date on market, technology and legislative trends in the industries in which we are active.

Our members sit on a range of technical committees worldwide and report on changes and progress so that our members can respond and influence future standards and regulations. Our Special Interest Groups (SIGs) take a deep dive into specific topics and provide updates to the wider membership at each meeting.

We offer two levels of membership; full membership provides complete access to all CoGDEM resources including minutes of meetings, our database of international standards and a wealth of technical literature. This membership level is typically adopted by our manufacturing members whose need of market, technological or legislative awareness is greatest. For those not directly active in manufacturing, such as notified bodies, distributors and consultants, we also offer an Associate level of membership.

To join our community, do not hesitate to visit our website www.cogdem.org.uk, email us at admin@cogdem.org.uk or give us a call on 01462 434322.

Author Contact Details

John Saffell, CoGDEM Chairman

- **NosmoTech Ltd. Director**
- Address: 11 The Crescent, Cambridge CB3 0AZ UK
- Tel: +44 (0)7802 827828
- Email: john@nosmotech.com
- Web: www.nosmotech.com



Rob White, Director of Excellence

- **DD-Scientific Ltd.**
- Address: Unit 1, Castle Trading Estate, Portchester, Hants, PO16 9SF, UK
- Tel: 02392 381249
- Email: rwhite@ddscientific.com
- Web: www.ddscientific.com



Leigh Greenham,

- **Retired**
- Oxford
- Tel: 07788 791554
- Email: leighgreenham@aol.com



READ, SHARE or COMMENT on this article at: envirotech-online.com/article

