

**UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme under the Multilateral Fund****Eliminating Dependency on Halons: Self Help Guide for Low Volume Consuming Countries**

INFORMATION RELEASE

December 1999

The UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics OzonAction Programme has released a new guide, *Eliminating Dependency on Halons: Self Help Guide for Low Volume Consuming Countries*, to help developing countries take the initial steps in managing their halon stocks and eventually phasing them as required under the Montreal Protocol. The guide provides a step-by-step approach to designing a national strategy that involves building awareness, setting policies, reducing unnecessary halon uses, switching to alternative fire protection methods and halon banking.

The guide was developed as part of UNEP's Work Programme under the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, in cooperation with the UNEP Halons Technical Option Committee. It is written for those involved in the management and phase out halons: governmental National Ozone Units (NOUs) and members of the fire protection community (public fire services, fire equipment vendors, halon users, insurance companies, customs officials and NGOs).

Technical innovations in fire protection methods have contributed to great reductions in risk to human life, business, government, national security and cultural heritage, especially during the second half of the 20th century. The development and widespread adoption of effective, safe and affordable chemical fire protection agents such as bromochlorofluorocarbons (commonly known as halons), have significantly helped to increase fire safety worldwide.

Unfortunately, what is good for fighting fires is not always good for the environment. In the case of halons, their long atmospheric lifetimes and high ozone destruction potential makes them extremely damaging to the stratospheric ozone layer, which protects humans, animals and plants from the damaging effects of ultraviolet solar radiation. Recognizing the danger posed by the continued use of these fire-fighting agents, the world community through the Montreal Protocol has agreed on a schedule to phase out halons.

Today halons are used by virtually every country on earth, although their use differs from one country to another. Small countries, including island states, have unique needs related to the phase out of halons. They import and use halons and usually do not produce fire-fighting equipment. Most of their existing halon stocks are dispersed in myriad small-sized extinguishers, bottles and systems. Unlike their larger brethren, low-volume halon consuming countries need information and skills, not large financial investments, in order to avoid new halon uses, identify and manage existing halon stocks and begin the transition to non-halon alternatives.

Developed countries have already made significant progress towards meeting this goal, as evidenced by their phase out of halon production by January 1994. Developing countries (known as "Article 5 countries"), which will now have to meet the challenge of freezing their halon consumption by January 2002, reducing it by 50% by January 2005 and totally phasing out by January 2010. Action towards meeting these targets must begin now. This guide helps low-volume consuming countries ensure effective fire protection while at the same time eliminating dependency on halons.

In the interest of making this document widely accessible to those who need it, [UNEP is also making it available free-of-charge on the OzonAction Programme's Web Site at \[www.uneptie.org/ozone/home.html\]\(http://www.uneptie.org/ozone/home.html\)](#).

This publication is part of the information exchange services provided by UNEP to developing countries to help them meet their obligations under the Montreal Protocol. The OzonAction Programme also provides other clearinghouse services (Training & Networking of ODS Officers) as well as assistance with the development of national ODS phase out strategies (Country Programmes) and Institutional Strengthening support. For more information, contact: UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme, Tour Mirabeau, 39-43 quai Andre Citroen, Paris 75739 cedex 15, France or Tel: (33.1) 44.37.14.50, Fax: (33.1)44.37.14.74, E-mail: rmshende@unep.fr,

Web: <http://www.uneptie.org/ozone/home.html>

To Order: Eliminating Dependency on Halons: Self Help Guide for Low Volume Consuming Countries 50 FF/US\$ 350

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About the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics

The mission of the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics is to help decision-makers in government, local authorities and industry develop and adopt policies and practices that:

- are cleaner and safer;
- make efficient use of natural resources;
- ensure adequate management of chemicals;
- incorporate environmental costs;
- reduce pollution and risks for humans and the environment.

The UNEP Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP DTIE), with its head office in Paris, is composed of one centre and four units:

- The International Environmental Technology Centre (Osaka), which promotes the adoption and use of environmentally sound technologies with a focus on the environmental management of cities and freshwater basins, in developing countries and countries in transition.
- **Production and Consumption (Paris)**, which fosters the development of cleaner and safer production and consumption patterns that lead to increased efficiency in the use of natural resources and reductions in pollution.
- **Chemicals (Geneva)**, which promotes sustainable development by catalyzing global actions and building national capacities for the sound management of chemicals and the improvement of chemical safety worldwide, with a priority on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and Prior Informed Consent (PIC, jointly with FAO).
- **Energy and OzonAction (Paris)**, which supports the phase-out of ozone depleting substances in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and promotes good management practices and use of energy, with a focus on atmospheric impacts. The UNEP/RISØ Collaborating Centre on Energy and Environment supports the work of the Unit.
- **Economics and Trade (Geneva)**, which promotes the use and application of assessment and incentive tools for environmental policy and helps improve the understanding of linkages between trade and environment and the role of financial institutions in promoting sustainable development.

UNEP DTIE activities focus on raising awareness, improving the transfer of information, building capacity, fostering technology cooperation, partnerships and transfer, improving understanding of environmental impacts of trade issues, promoting integration of environmental considerations into economic policies and catalyzing global chemical safety.

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