Application Guide

Gas detection in refrigeration systems
Commonly used abbreviations

- LFL = Lower Flammability Level
- OEL = Occupational Exposure Limits
- ATEL = Acute-Toxicity Exposure Limit
- ODL = Oxygen Deprivation Limit
- OSH = Occupational Safety Limit
- ODP = Ozone Depletion Potential
- GWP = Global Warming Potential
- TRK = Technische Richtkonzentrationen
- MAK = Maximale Arbeitsplatzkonzentrationen
- TLV = Threshold Limit Value
- STEL = Short Term Exposure Limit
- PEL = Permissible Exposure Limits
Introduction

Gas detection and leak detection are two distinct activities that cover the same topic, but the methods are very different.

Gas detection covers the analysis of air samples to determine whether they contain refrigerant gas. Leak detection is a systematic inspection of a refrigeration system to determine whether it is leaking. The terms gas detection and leak detection are not interchangeable, and must not be mixed.

Leak detection equipment is normally hand-held equipment carried by people, and used for detection of leaks in refrigeration systems. There are several types of leak detectors available, ranging from simple techniques like soapy water to sophisticated electrical instruments.

Gas detection equipment is usually used in a fixed installation with a number of sensors located in areas where refrigerant might be expected to accumulate in the event of a plant leak. These locations depend upon the layout of the machinery room and adjacent spaces, on the configuration of the plant and also on the refrigerant in question.

Before selecting the appropriate gas detection equipment, a number of questions have to be answered:

- Which gases have to be measured and in what quantities?
- Which sensor principle is the most suitable?
- How many sensors are needed?
- Where and how should they be positioned and calibrated?

- Which alarm limits are appropriate?
- How many are required?
- How is the alarm information processed?

This application guide will address these questions.

Sensor technology

The choice of sensor technology for refrigerant gas detection will depend on the specific target refrigerant gas and ppm range required. Danfoss offers a range of different sensor technologies to match most commonly used refrigerants, appropriate ppm ranges, and safety requirements for refrigeration systems.

EC - Electrochemical sensor

Electrochemical sensors are mainly used for toxic gases and are suitable for ammonia.

They consist of two electrodes immersed in an electrolyte medium.

An oxidation / reduction reaction generates an electric current that is proportional to the gas concentration.

They are very accurate (+/- 2%) and tend to be used mainly for toxic gases, which cannot be detected otherwise, or where high levels of accuracy are needed (fig. 1).

Danfoss offers specific EC sensors for ammonia in ranges up to 0-5,000 ppm with an expected lifetime of 2 years, depending on exposure to target gas.

Exposure to large ammonia leaks or constant background ammonia will shorten the sensor life (fig. 2). EC sensors can be re-calibrated as long as the sensitivity of the sensor is above 30%.

They are very selective and rarely subject to cross-interference. They may react to sudden large humidity changes but settle quickly.
**EC - Electrochemical sensor (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensitivity</th>
<th>Important! Sensor must be calibrated or new sensor must be installed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Max. operating time before calibration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Substantial” gas leak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>max. Tolerance range min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30% sensitivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Fig. 2: Large ammonia exposure shortens the lifetime of electrochemical sensors.](image)

**SC - Semiconductor sensor (solid state)**

The semi-conductor sensor functions by measuring the resistance change (proportional to the concentration), as gas is absorbed on to the surface of a semi-conductor, which is normally made from metal oxides. These can be used for a wide range of gases including combustible, toxic and refrigerant gases. It is claimed that they perform better than the catalytic type in the detection of combustible gases at low concentrations, up to 1,000 ppm. These are low-cost, long life, sensitive and can be used to detect a large range of gases including all the HCFC, HFC refrigerants, ammonia and hydrocarbons.

However, they are not selective, and are not suitable for detecting a single gas in a mixture, or for use where high concentrations of interfering gases are likely to be present (fig. 3). Interference from short term sources (e.g. exhaust gas from a truck), creating false alarms, can be overcome by enabling a delay of the alarm. Semi-conductors for halocarbons can be used to detect more than one gas or a mixture simultaneously. This is particularly useful in monitoring a plant room with several different refrigerants.

![Fig. 3: Sensitivity spectrum of various sensor technologies](image)
**P- Pellistor sensor**

Pellistors (sometimes called a bead or catalytic) are mainly used for combustible gases including ammonia, and are the most popular sensors for this application at high detection levels.

The sensor functions by burning the gas at the surface of the bead and measuring the resultant resistance change in the bead (which is proportional to concentration).

These are relatively low-cost, well established and understood, and they have a good life span (expected life time 3 to 5 years). The response time is usually below 10 seconds.

They can be subject to poisoning in certain applications.

Poisoning is the reduction of the reaction of the sensor to the target gas due to the presence (contamination) of another substance on the surface of the catalyst, that either reacts with it or forms a layer on top of it reducing its capacity to react to the target gas. Most common poisoning substances are silicon compounds.

Pellistors are used mainly with combustible gases and are therefore suited for ammonia and the hydrocarbon refrigerants at high concentrations.

They do sense all combustible gases, but they respond at different rates to each, and so they can be calibrated for particular gases. There are ammonia specific versions.

**IR - Infrared**

Infrared technology utilises the fact that most gases have a characteristic absorption band in the infrared region of the spectrum, and this can be used to detect them. Comparison with a reference beam allows the concentration to be determined.

Even though they are relatively expensive in comparison to other sensor, they have long life time of up to 15 years, high accuracy, and low cross sensitivity.

Due to its measuring principle infrared sensors can be subject to issues in dusty environments, where the presence of too many particles in the air may disturb the reading.

They are recommended and commonly used for Carbon dioxide detection. Although technology exists for other gases also, it is not common to find it in commercial solutions.

**Which sensor is suitable to a given refrigerant?**

Based on the target refrigerant gas and the actual ppm range the below table provides an overview of the suitability of the various sensor technologies offered by Danfoss.

**Suitability of different sensor technologies:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Semi-conductor</th>
<th>Electro-chemical</th>
<th>Pellistor (Catalytic)</th>
<th>Infrared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ammonia</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“low” concentration</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&lt; 100 ppm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“medium” concentration</td>
<td>(✔)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&lt; 1000 ppm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“high” concentration</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>(✔)</td>
<td>(✔)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&lt;10000 ppm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“very high” concentration</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(&gt; 10000 ppm)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carbon Dioxide</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HC Hydrocarbons</strong></td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HCFC - HFC Halocarbons</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ✔ Best solution
- ✔ Suitable - but less attractive
- – Not suitable

1) Measuring range 0-1000 ppm. Can be adjusted in the whole range.

2) Up to 5000 ppm. For specific applications.
Sensor response time

The response time is the elapsed time for a sensor to read a given percentage of the actual value for a step change in the target gas concentrations.

Response time for most sensors is given as $t_{90}$, meaning the time that it takes the sensor to read 90% of the actual concentration. Fig. 4 shows an example of a sensor with a response time $t_{90}$ of 90 seconds.

As shown in the graphic, the sensor reaction above 90% becomes slower and takes longer to read the 100%.

![Fig. 4: Sensor with a response time $t_{90}$ of 90 seconds](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAS</th>
<th>Sensor technology</th>
<th>Response time $t_{90}$ seconds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ammonia</td>
<td>Electrochemical 0-100/ 0-300 ppm</td>
<td>&lt;40s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrochemical 0-1000ppm</td>
<td>&lt;40s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electrochemical 0-5000ppm</td>
<td>&lt;40s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semiconductor</td>
<td>&gt;120s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pellistor</td>
<td>&lt;20s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrared</td>
<td>Infrared</td>
<td>&lt;90s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halocarbons</td>
<td>Semiconductor</td>
<td>&gt;120s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocarbons</td>
<td>Pellistor</td>
<td>&lt;15s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The need for gas detection

There are several reasons why gas detection is required. Two obvious reasons are to protect people, production and equipment from the impact of potential gas leakages and to comply with regulations. Other good reasons include:

- Reduced service cost (cost of replacement gas and the service call).
- Reduced energy consumption cost due to lack of refrigerant.
- Risk for damaging stock products due to a substantial leak.
- Possibility to reduce insurance costs.
- Taxes or quota on non-environmentally friendly refrigerants

The various refrigeration applications require gas detection for different reasons.

Ammonia is classified as a toxic substance with a very unique smell, as such it is “self alarming”. However, gas detectors are required to guarantee early warnings, and to monitor areas where people are not always present, such as machinery rooms. It is important to be aware that ammonia is the only common refrigerant lighter than air. In many cases, this will lead to ammonia rising above the breathing zone making it impossible for people to early detect ammonia leakages. The use of gas detectors in the right zones ensures early warnings in case of ammonia leakages.

Hydrocarbons are classified as flammable. Thus, it’s critical to verify that the concentration around the refrigeration system does not exceed the flammability limit.

Fluorinated refrigerants all have a certain negative impact on the environment, for which reason it’s very important to avoid any leaks.

CO₂ (Carbon Dioxide) is directly involved in the respiration process and should be treated accordingly. Approximately 0.04% CO₂ is present in the air. With higher concentration, some adverse reactions are reported starting with increase in breath rate (~100% at 3% CO₂ concentration) and leading to loss of consciousness and death at CO₂ concentrations above 10%.

Legislation and standards

The requirements for gas detection are different across countries worldwide. An overview of the most common rules and regulation can be found on the following pages.

Europe:
The present safety standard for refrigeration systems in Europe is EN 378:2016.

The specified alarm levels in EN 378:2016 are set at levels to allow evacuation of an area. The levels do not reflect the effects of long term exposure to leaked refrigerants. In other words, in EN 378 a gas detector is to warn when a sudden large release occurs, while machine room ventilation and system quality measures are to ensure that small leaks are too small to cause adverse health effects.

Note!
Requirements for gas detection equipment in Europe are covered by national legislation in the different countries, and consequently may differ from the requirements specified in EN 378.
Requirements for gas detection according to EN 378:2016 and ISO 5149:2014

With a few exceptions gas detection is required by EN 378:2016 and ISO 5149:2014 for all installations where the concentration in a room may exceed the practical limit for that space.

In the case of flammable and toxic refrigerants this means virtually all commercial and industrial systems in the case of A1 refrigerants it is possible to have small systems, which do not require gas detection. However, in most of the larger plants it is likely that the practical limit will be exceeded in the event of a major leak, and therefore gas detection is required.

Guidance can be found in EN 378:2016 part 3 or ISO 5149:2014 part 3. The requirements of the two standards are very similar, and are summarised in fig. 5.

If it can be shown by calculation that the concentration of refrigerant in a room can never reach the practical limit; then there is no need for fixed gas detection, except according to EN 378 if the system is below ground with a charge above \( m_2 \) (approx. 1 kg of propane). ISO 5149 does not have this exception. \( m_2 \) is a constant equal to \( 26 m_3 \times \text{LFL} \). For propane it is \( 26 m_3 \times 0,038 \text{ kg/m}_3 = 0,988 \text{ kg} \), or if your LFL is measured in gram, it is \( 26 m_3 \times 38\text{g/m}_3 =988 \text{ g} \). As such \( m_2 \) does not have any units, since the units depend solely on which unit you chose for LFL.

Most hydrocarbons have similar value of LFL, and \( m_2 \) is therefore typically around 1kg.

However, if the concentration can reach the practical limit, even for A1 refrigerants, then fixed detection must be installed - again with a few minor exceptions.

The practical limits for various refrigerants are given in Annex II, which are extracted from EN 378-2016 part 1. In these tables the practical limit of ammonia is based upon its toxicity. The practical limits of the hydrocarbons are based upon their flammability and are set at 20% of their lower flammable limit. The practical limits for all the A1 refrigerants are set at their Acute Toxicity Exposure Limit (ATEL).

If the total refrigerant charge in a room, divided by the net room volume, is greater than the “practical limit” (see Annex II), it is reasonable to conclude that fixed gas detection system should be installed.

Both EN378:2016 and ISO 5149:2014 require that an indicating device is provided to show whether the relief valve has discharged on systems with 300 kg refrigerants or more. A possibility is to place a gas detector in the discharge line.

Fig. 5: Requirements for gas detection according to EN 378:2016 part 3 and ISO 5149:2014 part 3
Requirements for gas detection according to ASHRAE 15-2016 (USA)

Requirements for gas detection according to ASHRAE 15-2016 state requirements for rooms with refrigerating equipment including machinery rooms. The “Low Level” alarm values are less or equal to TLV-TWA levels.

In practice, the Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) values from ASHRAE 34 are used since they are based on TLV-TWA (see also "Occupational Exposure Limits", page 18).

![Fig. 6: Gas detection requirements according to ASHRAE 15-2016.](image)

* Note 1: The charge limit stated in ASHRAE 15-2016 can also be found in Annex II (RCL) - for selected refrigerants.
* Note 2: ASHRAE 15 does not include Ammonia. Refer to ANSI/IIAR-2.

Requirements for gas detection according to ANSI/IIAR-2 (USA)

ANSI/IIAR-2 requires machinery rooms to be provided with ammonia gas detectors. It requires 3 different alarm levels (25, 150 and 40000 ppm) with different response requirements according to each of the levels.

![Fig. 7: Gas detection requirements according to the ANSI/IIAR-2](image)
Installation guideline

When it comes to installation of gas detection there are two approaches:

- Perimeter detection
- Point detection

With perimeter detection, you place sensors all around the perimeter of the space in question, to make sure you monitor the whole space.

With point detection, you locate a sensor at a particular position, where you are concerned about a leak (e.g. at the compressor).

For gases heavier than air, sensors should be located close to the ground/lowest point. For gases lighter than air, sensors should be mounted high up on the walls, ceiling or near exhaust, but convenient for maintenance. If the density is equal to air, the sensors should be mounted at face level.

In some countries it may be mandatory to have an UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) connected to the gas detectors to ensure safe operation during a power failure.

![Relative density refrigerant/air](image)

Fig. 8: Relative density refrigerant/air
**Location of gas detectors**

Gas detectors must be powered as specified in the installation guide and located within the specified cable length from the central control unit/monitor.

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**In general:**

- Do not mount to a structure that is subject to vibration and shock, such as piping and piping supports.
- Do not locate near excessive heat or in wet or damp locations.
- Do not mount where it will be exposed to direct solar heating.
- Do not install in areas where condensation may form.

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**The two methods of locating sensors:**

- Point detection: Sensors are located as near as possible to the most likely sources of leakage.
- Perimeter detection: Sensors surround the hazardous area completely.

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The most appropriate method is selected depending on the size and nature of the site.

- Detectors shall be located high/low according to the density of the actual refrigerant.
- If mechanical ventilation exists in a machinery room, air will move towards the fan. In problematic locations a smoke tube can indicate air movements in a space and assist in the location of sensors.
- In a cold store, sensors should, if possible, be placed on the wall in the return airflow.
- Consideration should also be given to the possibility of pockets of gas collecting in the event of a leak.

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Important!

Do not place immediately in front of a coil due to temperature and humidity fluctuations. These may occur especially during defrost or loading of a cold store. Make sure that pits, stairwells and trenches are monitored since they may fill with stagnant pockets of gas. Monitoring where leaked refrigerant can stagnate is generally required by standards.

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As general guideline:

- If there is one compressor/chiller in the room; sample at the perimeter of the unit. For two chillers; sample between them, with three or more chillers; sample between and on each side. Ensure that the area being sampled is sufficiently monitored. Do not skimp on sensors.
- Place the sensor in the location(s) most likely to develop a gas leak, including mechanical joints, seals, and where there are regular changes in the system's temperature and pressure or excessive vibration, such as compressors and evaporator control valves.

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The arrangement of the equipment in the room can also have an impact on the most effective place to monitor.

Locations requiring most protection in a machinery or plant room would be around gas boilers, compressors, pressurized storage tanks, gas cylinders, storage rooms, or pipelines.

Most vulnerable are valves, gauges, flanges, T-joints, filling or draining connections etc.

Sensors should be positioned a little way back from any high-pressure parts to allow gas clouds to form. Otherwise any leakage of gas is likely to pass by in a high-speed jet and will not be detected by the sensor.

Accessibility and space to allow calibration and service must be considered.
Number of gas detectors in a facility

The requirements for the number of gas detectors in a facility are not specifically stated in standards.

As general guideline:

- A gas detector can normally cover an area of about 50-100 m² depending on the actual condition of the space to be covered. In spaces with several obstructions and lack of ventilation the coverage is approx. 50 m², provided it is mounted near ceiling level or near floor level depending on the refrigerant density. In non-obstructed spaces with good mechanical ventilation, the coverage can be increased up to approx. 100 m².
- Machinery rooms:
  It is recommended that gas detectors are placed above or at both sides of compressors or other non-static parts of the system or down wind of such equipment, in the direction of continuously operating ventilation extractors.
  Where there are deep beams and lighter than air refrigerants, it is recommended that the detectors are mounted between pairs of beams and on the underside of the beams.

Calibration / test

Calibration/test of gas detectors is extremely important to ensure and document the proper accuracy, responsiveness and operation of the unit.

Gas detectors are subject to changes in the measurement properties, dependent on the operation time and/or exposure time. Therefore, regular calibration is needed. The frequency depends on various factors, however the following four are of particular importance:

- Requirements of national legislation
- Recommended calibration interval
- Lifetime of the sensors
- The lifetime and calibration needs of electrochemical sensors are highly affected by exposure to the target gas, reducing the lifetime and the calibration interval. For that reason the concentrations of the target gas in the area should also be considered.

From a technically and safety point of view, the sensors offered by Danfoss should be calibrated/tested according to the stated intervals in the table below.

**IMPORTANT!**

If national legislation requires calibration/test with intervals shorter (stricter) than stated in the table below, these requirements must be followed.

**Note:** EN 378:2016 and ISO 5149 require gas detectors to be checked on an annual basis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimated life time [year]</th>
<th>Min. recommended calibration interval [year]</th>
<th>Recommended test interval** [year]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>&gt;5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>&gt;2*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If the sensor is exposed to high or constant ammonia concentrations, the life time will be reduced.

An EC sensor remain functional above 30% of sensitivity.

** If calibration is performed, test is not required. However, when calibration interval is longer than the test interval, then a “bump” test must be performed.
Two different methods are available for fulfilling the calibration requirements.

- Replacing the sensor (sensor cartridge) with a new factory pre-calibrated sensor.
- Performing a calibration to the sensor using calibration gas (gas mixture with known target gas concentration).

**Method I**

*Calibration by means of replacing sensor heads*

This method requires that the supplier offers factory pre-calibrated sensor heads with calibration certificate and traceability codes. Additionally, an electrical simulation is required to verify the output signals and alarm settings.

This method can be compared with the method used for safety valves. The manufacturer produces, tests, and certifies the product, which can then be mounted in the system.

Danfoss offers the above-mentioned solution. The sensor head, which is the essential measuring element of the gas detector, is produced, tested, calibrated, and certified by Danfoss.

After the gas detection unit has been tested with the on-board test button function, which simulates alarm signals and relay activation, to ensure all electrical components are functional, the new calibrated sensor head can be installed.

Danfoss recommends that the calibration is done by means of pre-calibrated replacement sensors:

- As sensors have a limited lifetime, this method basically ensures that the customer has a gas detector as good as new after replacing the sensor head.
- The method is typically more efficient and cost effective compared to calibration carried out on site.

**Method II**

*Calibration of gas detectors by means of calibration gas*

The calibration of gas detectors by means of calibration gas has traditionally been made by using multimeters and adjustment of potentiometers, which makes the process relatively complicated, time consuming, and expensive. However, the Danfoss gas detection units have an integrated, digital calibration function that makes the calibration process easier, cheaper, and faster. Even though the calibration is a simple procedure, it still requires test equipment and basic competence in calibration.

Calibration equipment for Gas Detection Units (GDU) consists of:

- Valve/Flow regulator.
- Gas cylinder with the correct calibration gas for each refrigerant and concentration (ppm).
- Calibration adapter.
- If the gas detector unit does not have a display, the service tool or the PC tool is required.

In order to execute the calibration function, the gas detector unit needs to be equipped with a display or connection to either the service tool or the PC tool.

Some calibration gas cylinders are treated as dangerous substances, and therefore subject to specific shipping requirements.
**Method II (Continued)**

*Calibration of gas detectors by means of calibration gas*

**Bump test**

A bump test cannot supersede any tests involving calibration. It is only a function test (signal or no signal).

**Bump test of gas sensors (this test is a function test - it is not a calibration)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Refrigerant</th>
<th>SC Semiconductor</th>
<th>EC Electrochemical</th>
<th>P Pellistor</th>
<th>IR Infrared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ampoules</td>
<td>Ammonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampoules (or lighter gas)</td>
<td>HCFC, HCF</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighter gas</td>
<td>HC - Hydro Carbon</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ampoules (or breath on sensor)</td>
<td>CO₂</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 10
Alarm / sensitivity range of gas detectors

All commonly used gas detectors have a proportional output signal (4-20 mA, 0-10 V, or 0-5 V), and some pre-set alarm settings.

When selecting the actual measuring range and sensor type, several factors should be considered:

In general, alarm levels should be as low as practically possible, depending on the actual refrigerant and the purpose of the alarm. There are often requests for more alarm levels, but experience shows that two alarm limits are sufficient for gas detection.

The pre-alarm provokes a reaction, either automatically and/or in the form of alarm instructions; if not, the main alarm may be triggered. This entails a whole series of consequences, including switching off machines.

A main alarm should rarely (and preferably never) be necessary!

Danfoss recommendations for alarm levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DANFOSS recommendations for alarm levels: EN 378:2016</th>
<th>National requirements</th>
<th>Comply with: EN 378</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensor Type</td>
<td>LEVEL I</td>
<td>Personal safety (occupational) (TWA-values)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ppm</td>
<td>ppm</td>
<td>ppm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammonia R717</td>
<td>Machinery rooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EC</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>~</td>
<td>~</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon Dioxide R744 (CO₂)</td>
<td>IR</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halocarbon HFC R134a, R404A, R407C, R410A, R507</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocarbon HC R290, R600, R600a, R1270 Concentration ≤ 20% of LFL</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All proposed levels are ≤ the max. values in EN 378:2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sensor Type</td>
<td>LEVEL I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ppm</td>
<td>ppm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon Dioxide R744 (CO₂)</td>
<td>IR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halocarbon HFC R134a, R404A, R407C, R410A, R507</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrocarbon HC R290, R600, R600a, R1270 Concentration ≤ 25% of LFL</td>
<td>CT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: All proposed levels are ≤ the max. values in ASHRAE 15:2016
### DANFOSS recommendations for alarm levels: 
ANSI/IIAR 2-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensor type</th>
<th>LEVEL I (Personal safety (occupational))</th>
<th>LEVEL II (main-alarm)</th>
<th>LEVEL III (deenergize main components)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<th>Sensor type</th>
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<th>LEVEL II (main-alarm)</th>
<th>LEVEL III (deenergize main components)</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ammonia R717</th>
<th>Machinery rooms</th>
<th>Safety valves - vent line</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EC 25</td>
<td>EC 150 P 30000</td>
<td>SC 9000</td>
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</table>

Danfoss recommendations for alarm levels (Continued)
## Actions triggered by gas detection

The actions to be triggered when leaked refrigerant is detected depends on the standard applied. National regulations, especially the “Occupational Exposure Limits”, varies from country to country.

|----------------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|
| **Up to 50 kg refrigerant** | At max. 157 ppm:  
- Actuate an alarm  
- Notify an authorised person  
- Audible buzzer 15 dBA above background noise level  
- Flashing lamp  
- Alarm to be inside the room  
- For machinery rooms: Also outside the room, which can be at a supervised location  
- For machinery rooms: Start emergency ventilation | At max. 1000 ppm:  
- Audible and visual alarm  
- Inside the machinery room and outside each entrance  
- Start mechanical ventilation  
- Shut down combustion processes drawing air from the room (except if the combustion is driving the compressor) | Machinery rooms at max. 25 ppm:  
- Audible and visual alarm  
- Inside the machinery room and outside each entrance  
- Alarm to monitored location  
- Stop non-emergency ventilation (unless it is designed to work with R717) | |
| **More than 50 kg refrigerant** | Same actions as above, but starting at max. 500 ppm:  
- At max. 3000 ppm also:  
  - Stop the system  
  - Stop the power supply to everything which is not Ex approved | Same actions as above, but starting at max. 200 ppm:  
- At max. 3000 ppm also:  
  - Stop the system  
  - Stop the power supply to everything which is not Ex approved | Machinery rooms at max. 150 ppm also:  
- Start emergency ventilation | |
| **More than 3000 kg refrigerant** | Same as above, but also:  
- Central alarm station  
- Specialized personnel on site within 60 min of alarm | | Machinery rooms at max. 40000 ppm also:  
- De-energize compressors, refrigerant pumps, and normally closed valves | Not in machinery rooms at max. 25 ppm:  
- Alarm to monitored location  
- Other actions depends on system type and location |
| **More than 4500 kg refrigerant** | Same as above, but also:  
- Central alarm station  
- Specialized personnel on site within 60 min of alarm | | | |

### Actions for refrigerants other than ammonia

For all systems except ventilated enclosures and systems using alternative risk management:

- At 50% ATEL/ODL/RCL or 25% LFL (see Annex II):
  - For flammable refrigerants: Stop the system
  - Actuate an alarm
  - Notify an authorised person
  - Audible buzzer 15 dBA above background noise level
  - Flashing lamp
  - Alarm to be inside the room
  - For occupancy A: Also outside the room, which shall be at a supervised location
  - For occupancy B and C: Only inside is needed
  - For machinery rooms: Also outside the room, which can be at a supervised location
  - For machinery rooms: Start emergency ventilation

- At OEL (see Annex III):
  - Audible and visual alarm
  - Inside the machinery room and outside each entrance
  - Start mechanical ventilation
  - Shut down combustion processes drawing air from the room (except if refrigerant is R744)

For ventilated enclosures:

- If a detector is used for staring ventilation:
  - Start ventilation at 25% LFL (see Annex II)

For systems using alternative risk management:

- If a detector is used for staring ventilation:
  - Start ventilation at 50% ATEL/ODL/RCL or 25% LFL (see Annex II)
References

- EN 378:2016 Refrigerating systems and heat pumps – Safety and environmental requirements
- ASHRAE 34:2016 Designation and Safety Classification of Refrigerants
- ISO 5149:2014 Refrigerating systems and heat pumps – Safety and environmental requirements
- EU F-Gas Regulation (EC) No 517/2014
- Danfoss gas detector documentation (www.danfoss.com/ir)
# Annex I

## Common refrigerant data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refrigerant type</th>
<th>Refrigerant Name</th>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Safety group</th>
<th>Vapour density @ 25°C / 1 bar [kg/m³]</th>
<th>Relativ density [-]</th>
<th>ODP Ozone Depletion Potential [-]</th>
<th>GWP Global Warming Potential (100 yr ITH/F gas regulation) [-]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>R717 Ammonia</td>
<td>NH₃</td>
<td>B2L</td>
<td>0.700</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>R744 Carbon Dioxide</td>
<td>CO₂</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>HCFC</td>
<td>R22 Chlorodifluoromethane</td>
<td>CH₂ClF₂</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.055</td>
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<tr>
<td>HFC</td>
<td>R134a 1,1,2-tetrafluoroethane</td>
<td>CH₃CH₂F</td>
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<td>4.17</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1430</td>
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<tr>
<td>HFC</td>
<td>R404A R125/143a/134a (44/52/4)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3260</td>
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<tr>
<td>HFC</td>
<td>R407C R32/125/134a (23/25/52)</td>
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<td>3.53</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
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<td>R507 R125/143a (50/50)</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>R290 Propane</td>
<td>CH₃CH₂CH₃</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>R600 Butane</td>
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<td>HC</td>
<td>R600a Iso-butane</td>
<td>CH(CH₃)₂</td>
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<td>2.38</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>R1270 Propylene</td>
<td>CH₂=CH₂</td>
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<td>HFC</td>
<td>R32 Difluoromethane</td>
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<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>HFO/HFC</td>
<td>R1234ze(E) Trans-1,3,3,3-tetrafluoro-1-propene</td>
<td>CF₃=CH=CHF</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
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# Annex II


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refrigerant type</th>
<th>Refrigerant Name</th>
<th>Formula</th>
<th>Safety group</th>
<th>Practical Limit [kg/m³]</th>
<th>Toxicity ATEL/ODL [kg/m³]</th>
<th>Flammability LFL [kg/m³]</th>
<th>Alarm settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>R717 Ammonia</td>
<td>NH₃</td>
<td>B2L</td>
<td>0.0035</td>
<td>0.00022</td>
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<tr>
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<td>R744 Carbon Dioxide</td>
<td>CO₂</td>
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<td>R22 Chlorodifluoromethane</td>
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<td>R134a 1,1,2-tetrafluoroethane</td>
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<td>R600a Iso-butane</td>
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<td>0.28</td>
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### Annex III

**ASHRAE 15-2016**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Refrigerant type</th>
<th>Refrigerant Name</th>
<th>Safety group</th>
<th>RCL [g/m³]</th>
<th>RCL [lb/Mcf]</th>
<th>RCL [ppm]</th>
<th>OEL/TWA (40 hours work week without effect) [ppm]</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>R717 Ammonia</td>
<td>B2L</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>R744 Carbon Dioxide</td>
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<td>210</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59000</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>R134a 1,1,1,2-tetrafluoroethane</td>
<td>A1</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>50000</td>
<td>1000</td>
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<td>R1270 Propylene</td>
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<tr>
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<td>R32 Difluoromethane</td>
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<td>HFO/HFC</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>16000</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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