

# Pressure builds on Daimler to fall into line on the use of R1234yf

REGULATIONS

Daimler is looking increasingly isolated in its refusal to use HFO R1234yf in its new cars, following news that other carmakers have found no new safety risks.

The owner of Mercedes now faces the threat of heavy fines for flouting the Mobile Air Conditioning Directive, which banned refrigerants with a GWP of over 150 after 11 January this year, after the EC confirmed that all carmakers must comply with the directive.

Leicester MEP Chris Davies has condemned Daimler, describing its delaying tactics as “criminal” and calling on the EC to make an example of the firm.

A spokesperson for European Industry Commissioner Antonio Tajani told news agencies that the matter was clear cut: “If Daimler does not meet this requirement, its new models cannot be approved. The EC must ensure that this legislation is respected.”

The automotive research body SAE International, which convened a group of 11 carmakers in a collaborative research programme said in December: “Several OEMs have shared test results regarding their vehicles. With the exception



Daimler, the owner of Mercedes, is facing censure by the EC

of Daimler, no OEM in the CRP has provided information that would suggest a concern for the safe use of R1234yf in their vehicles.”

Daimler requested a six-month moratorium in November, and it has now emerged that the German authorities have requested that Daimler is treated as an individual case and given the chance to find an alternative solution.

A Daimler spokesman said it is waiting for an answer.

In one of a series of questions to the Commission, Mr Davies said the carmaker was seeking to benefit

from continuing to use the lower cost R134a: “Daimler has, in effect, issued a challenge to the Commission and to EC law, and is clearly seeking to gain a competitive advantage at the expense of other car manufacturers.

“Will the Commission make it clear now that it will not be deterred by the actions of this criminal company?”

In response, Mr Tajani set out the EC’s position: “As of 11 January 2013, all economic operators will need to fully comply with the directive.

In practice, this means a ban on

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MAC systems using a gas with a GWP exceeding 150 in newly type-approved vehicles – that is, M1 and N1 vehicles type-approved after 11 January 2011.

The ban includes MAC systems using the gas R134a. If one or more member states fail to implement the directive after 11 January 2013, the Commission will take the necessary steps to ensure full compliance with EU law.”

In response, a Daimler spokesman said: “We are looking at a couple of options including CO2 and blends. But our tests have shown R1234yf burns whereas R134a doesn’t.

“We don’t see why we should leave state-of-the-art technology for a new one.

Mr Tajani reiterated that supply problems with R1234yf, which had caused the MAC directive to be postponed for over a year, were no longer seen as a valid reason for delay.

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