



Environmental Policy

SECTION 1: The NABAS commitment to sustainable development

The objectives of this document set out to cover:

- Preventing pollution
- Complying with environmental legislation
- Getting people involved
- Documented, communicated and easily available policy
- Publicly available information
- Legislation and information reviewed on a regular basis

NABAS is committed to:

- making optimal use of resources without compromising the health and welfare of people or animals
- ensuring the principles of sustainability become a natural part of all NABAS operations
- implementing and advising it's membership on all environmental improvements and ensuring that, as an absolute minimum, NABAS abides by all relevant legislation
- ensuring that NABAS members receive information to help them act in the most environmentally responsible manner possible

The NABAS Environment Plan includes:

- helping NABAS members to implement energy controls in all buildings;
- sourcing and advising members on products to reduce environmental impact;
- advising members on the best ways of sorting and recycling waste so as to reduce the volume of waste sent for incineration or used as landfill;
- working towards attaining the International ISO 14001 standard, according to the European EMAS II directive
- requiring members to work with their suppliers, contractors and employees to show consideration for the environment;
- encouraging members to be open about their environmental performance in dealings with their employees, customers, visitors and public authorities;
- working with members on how to phase out or eliminating the use of hazardous substances as far as possible.

SECTION 2: General Principals and management system

2.1 The NABAS Vision:

To be recognised within the industry as the leader in environmental issues by following the ten environmental directives [shown in Section 5], and, where possible, by exceeding regulatory requirements.

2.2 The NABAS Mission:

To strive for sustainable development in minimising the impact on the environment of processes and products used within the industry and by maximising the use of recyclable materials, together with education in the responsible use and handling of materials

2.3 NABAS Policy:

Through education and information to attain sustainable environment procedures that will reduce the impact of our industry on the environment.

2.4 NABAS Objectives

- to ensure management commitment to a culture of environmental protection throughout both the NABAS membership and the industry as a whole
- to work with others to design products and processes to minimise the environmental impact of products and materials from 'cradle to grave' and to inform those both within and outside the industry on recycling and safe disposal at the end of a product's life
- to strive for continuous reduction of waste and pollution in a quest for sustainable development and as proof that ecological methods are both responsible and profitable
- to monitor environmental parameters with the view of improving environmentally responsible practices
- to promote an open dialogue both within the industry and within organisations and companies which our industry supplies
- to build an information resource to allow both NABAS members, and those working within the industry, easy access to environmental information through the NABAS website.

2.5 Environmental Management

Environmental protection is a key element of the NABAS culture. Focus on continual improvement will help both NABAS and the industry adapt quickly to new environmental concerns as well as a commitment to continual improvement.

2.6 Regulations

Environmental regulations are continually monitored to keep standards updated; and this is achieved by:

- reference and adherence to NetRegs (Government environmental guidance for small and medium businesses in the UK) for news and updates on existing and new environmental legislation and recommendations
- considering policies and recommendations set out by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee that may have in any way relevance to environmental policies within our industry
- liaising and working with other organisations involved in environmental issues within our industry:
 - British Association of Compressed Gases
 - European Association of Compressed Gases
 - British Standards regulatory standards
 - Environmental Organisations such as WRAP [Waste Recycling Association Project]

SECTION 3: Specific Environmental Considerations

3.1 Packaging & Waste

NABAS endeavours to encourage those working within the industry to reduce the number of individually packaged products in their range. Instead, products should be supplied in bulk, with minimal outer packaging sufficient to protect products from damage, and provide a suitable container for shipping.

NABAS is working on ways of achieving 100% re-use of cartons used by manufacturers and suppliers.

Paper used by both NABAS and its members in administrative and promotional campaigns has been reduced by better use of digital technologies, such as website and email based news articles and document display replacing printed news letters and document distribution by post.

3.2 Product Sourcing

Historically, foil balloons and accessories have been imported from the USA. In recent years, many NABAS members, and others within the industry have sourced these products within Europe, reducing transport costs as well as reducing carbon footprint.

Sustainability of raw materials and supplies has also become part of this agenda.

3.3 Emissions to Air

3.3.1 Helium Gas

Helium is a component part of our industry. Any environmental impact of Helium is therefore considered within this policy.

Helium gas (He) is manufactured as a by-product of natural gas distillation. Historically produced in the USA, production facilities to supply Europe began in Algeria in the mid-1990s with a second plant still to come into full operation. A further production plant was established in Qatar in 2006 thus reducing the CO₂ footprint of helium production and distribution even further.. In addition, Helium is transported in its liquefied state created by the distillation process, approx. 5 times less volume than with gas state transport methods available.

Helium gas itself does not pose any significant environmental threat, as release into the atmosphere does not cause pollution or reaction with other environmental elements - It is non-toxic and inert. Helium eventually escapes from the atmosphere into outer space.

Use of Helium should be in accordance with Health & Safety practices, with the relevant data sheets, and handling information sourced from suppliers. NABAS provides detailed guidance on the use, transportation and storage of helium gas to its members via web-based news items, informational articles and through training courses. Best practice and methodologies are recommended to members with regard to helium inflation equipment and inflation techniques to help reduce the wastage of balloons and helium gas by the promotion of the benefits of adopting good practices.

3.3.2 CO₂ emissions

While CO₂ is not emitted as part of industry's practices, NABAS is aware of CO₂ emissions as a by-product of processes involved within the product life. These have been addressed separately, such as with product sourcing and reduction of packaging.

3.4 Environmental Contamination

Foil balloons do not pose any significant environmental issue if used in a responsible manner. They are not toxic, but do not degrade, and through ignorance can be released into the environment. The following measures to reduce risk to the environment have been taken:

Prevention of release into environment

The industry recommendation is that foil balloons should not be released into the Environment. NABAS. has taken this further by recommending to its members and others within the industry that a suitable weight is attached to foil balloons to prevent them floating away.

Warnings

Foil balloons are printed with a notice to not release them outdoors. Balloons should be disposed of in a safe manner at the end of their life, and via NABAS and the media, balloon sellers are advised to inform consumers about this.

Foil balloons also carry the relevant European Safety standard CE marks, and other relevant safety information that the manufacturer provides by law:

CE (manufacturer's name)

INKS USED ON THIS BALLOON CONFORM TO GOVERNMENT STANDARDS THAT RELATE TO CHILDREN'S TOYS

WARNING: THIS BALLOON CONDUCTS ELECTRICITY. TO AVOID POWER OUTAGES OR ELECTRIC SHOCK, DO NOT RELEASE OUTDOORS OR USE NEAR POWER LINES.

3.5 Product disposal and recycling

NABAS has been looking to improve systems within the industry for recycling of products, starting with balloon weights. Historically, these were supplied from the USA. The heavier weights for large foil balloon shapes contained a metal insert inside the plastic moulding to increase weight. This made recycling problematic.

Suppliers within the UK have been sourced in order to reduce the carbon footprint of supply, where the plastic used consists of recycled granules. The manufactured weights are made from polystyrene (recycling resin code #6 PS), and can be recycled again, greatly improving product sustainability.

SECTION 4: Environmental Progress

These key Environmental events are a testimony to the proactive environmental approach adopted by NABAS

- Advice to members and others on recycling cartons provided by suppliers
- Advice to members and others on use of non-packaged balloon ranges
- Sourcing balloons from within the EU
- Advice to members and others on turning to a website and other mediums in place of printed catalogues and other printed stationery
- Advice to members and others on using electronic invoice and statement distribution
- Sourcing recyclable balloon weights from within the UK
- Created a formal Environmental Policy
- Started creation of a web-based information resource to help educate members and others within the industry on responsible use and disposal of products.

SECTION 5: Ten Environmental Directives

NABAS strives to be at the forefront of ecological and environmental awareness within the industry.

The NABAS ecological vision is to become the industry leader by working with all sides of the industry to achieve environmental neutrality. To this end NABAS is committed not only to encourage members and others within the industry to meet all environmental requirements of those communities in which we operate, but also set out to comply with the following environmental and ecological directives.

1. Regulations

- Meet the most stringent environmental regulations laid down by government
- Comply with protocols in advance of their introduction

2. Conservation

- Reduce energy consumption wherever possible through process and facilities optimisation.
- Reduce paper use by embracing digital technologies

3. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- Reduce the CO2 footprint within the industry through conservation, decreased wastage and improved product sourcing
- Encouraging and advising members and others within the industry to recruit their workforce locally

4. Pollution

- Limit any environmental pollutants through promotion of the responsible use of all products.

5. Chemicals

- Reduce consumption of chemicals that are not sustainable or cause environmental harm.

6. Waste

- Working with members and others within the industry to reduce the amount of landfilled waste as far as possible through reuse or recycling.

7. Products & Processes

- Work with manufacturers to encourage the design products for decreased energy consumption.

- Establish a Product Life Cycle Assessment
- Systematically include environmental impact in our development and sourcing

8. Proactivity

- Work with and encourage everyone within the industry to support an environmental policy
- Inform and educate all within the industry on the safe use and disposal of products.

9. Measurement

- Continuously monitor progress of environmental policies.
- Communicate with all sectors of the industry who have specific environmental concerns

10. Validation

- Achieve validation through an accredited body as our Environmental Policy develops to a suitably advanced level.

SECTION 6: Sources & References

Cady, H.P.; D. F. McFarland (1906). "Helium in Kansas Natural Gas". Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science 20: 80–81. doi:10.2307/3624645. <http://mc1.litvip.jstor.org/stable/3624645>. Retrieved on 2008-07-20.

"Helium End User Statistic" (PDF). U.S. Geological Survey. <http://minerals.usgs.gov/ds/2005/140/helium-use.pdf>. Retrieved on 2008- 07-20.

- NetRegs - Government Environmental Guidance - www.netregs.gov.uk
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) - www.jncc.gov.uk
- National Association of Balloon Artists & Suppliers (NABAS) - www.nabas.co.uk
- EMAS - ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm
- The Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) - www.bioplasticscouncil.org

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