

What is this 'written scheme' thing?

The written scheme is part of your obligations when complying with the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000:S.I.128 (PSSR), which covers all types of pressure systems including compressed air installations. The regulations provide a complete legal framework to control the in-service operation of your system and includes examination and the keeping of records to name but a few.

A written scheme is required if the pressure/volume relationship of your system is 250 bar/litres or greater, but even if it is less than this you will still be required to carry out certain regulations within the PSSR, including the establishing of a maintenance programme.

There is no doubt who is responsible for compliance? It is you the 'owner' and the 'user' as being for both installed and mobile pressure systems.

At BCAS we regularly get questions and phone calls about written schemes, they come from all areas of the compressed air world, and it is fair to say there appears to be quite a split in knowledge and experience. Clearly those of you who know all about the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations (PSSR) and what the implications are for users and/or owners of compressed air systems will not be taking any chances. Your written scheme will be up to date, having been reviewed in line with any system changes or the review date on your written scheme document.

However, some end users appear to have little or no idea of what this means for them and of the consequences of failing to comply with their legal responsibilities.

We have discussed this issue with our members and our advice is that it is best practice for them to keep you the customer fully informed about the PSSR. Yes, it is the user or owners responsibility to comply with the legislation, but as a service provider it is beholding on them to address this issue with you.

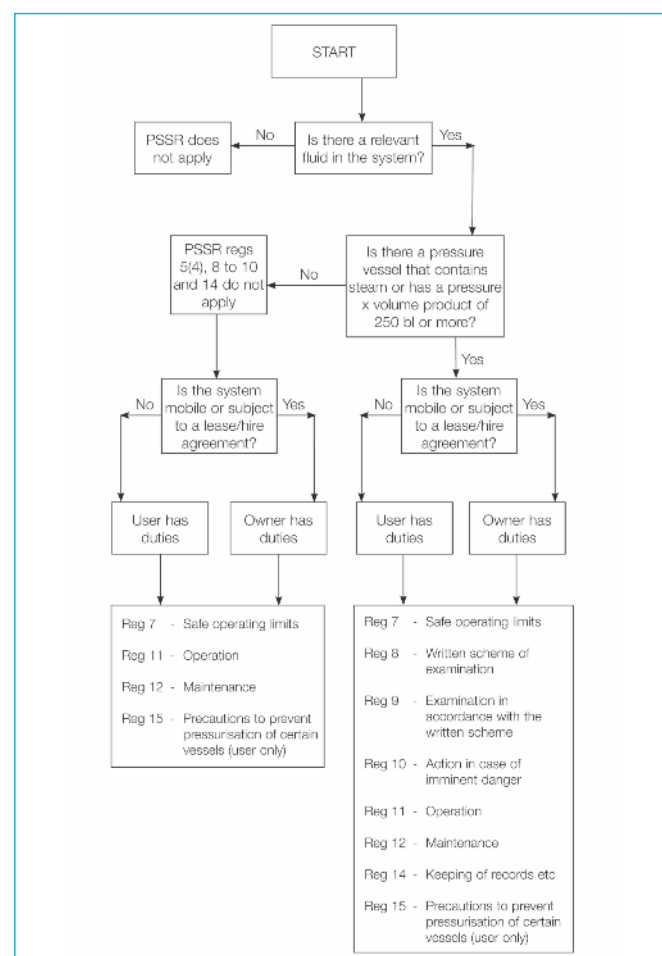
Your supplier can clearly demonstrate they are being effective by including a statement in the contract giving clear advice about the regulations and how they may impact on you the owner / user of the equipment. A proactive approach to written schemes not only satisfies their duty of care but also helps you to avoid issues in the future should problems arise.

Clearly there is also an opportunity to work with your supplier on an on-going basis as maintenance work will be required on that system, either by virtue of a Written Scheme of examination (Regulations 8 and 9) or Maintenance (Regulation 12). So when choosing a best in class partner to work with ensure that they support you in this important area.

There are other commercial organisations that sometimes offer assistance in this area, but our advice is always to work with an organisation that specialises in compressed air and aligned products. Some larger organisations even choose to employ a competent person in-house to fulfil their obligations and BCAS provides certified training and refresher courses to ensure they

comply with the current legislation. In addition we have a one-day course to help you understand the written scheme and the regulations therein.

The HSE has drawn up a very useful decision tree that could be used to help with your understanding of the regulations and how they apply to you. Please see illustration or visit: http://www.hseni.gov.uk/l122_safety_of_pressure_systems.pdf



Notes:

In this case the relevant fluid is compressed air

The pressure x volume product is obtained by multiplying the system operating pressure in bar by the volume of the pressure vessel in litres