

**16 April 2008**

## **THERMOSTATIC RADIATOR VALVES – A GROWTH MARKET**

*With energy conservation firmly on both the government and public radar, Chris Ramster, Comap's Product Strategy Director, discusses the effects of the 'green revolution' on the thermostatic radiator valve market and takes a look at other drivers affecting the future of the TRV.*

"The market for TRVs has grown massively since the conservation of fuel and power in dwellings Building Regulations were amended in 2002. In 1995, manual valves prevailed and the market for TRVs stood at 3.7 million pieces. However, by 2003 the TRV market had grown hugely to 7.48 million – and with more than 160,000 new homes being built across the UK each year, the market continues to grow.

"Under the Kyoto Protocol, by 2008-2012 the UK must reduce its baseline emissions of six major greenhouse gases by 12.5 per cent from a baseline target set in 1990. The UK government has also set a target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 20 per cent beneath that baseline, with a long term goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 60% by 2050.\*

"Installers, now more than ever, are called upon to offer environmentally friendly solutions to their customers, because - as a result of the increase in the number of energy using goods and the prevalence of installed central heating - domestic energy consumption has been increasing slowly but steadily since the 1970s.

"Over a quarter of the UK's staggering annual 536 million tonnes of CO2 emissions are attributable to energy used in the home. And in the home, three quarters of carbon dioxide emissions come from the energy used by heating and providing hot water. Therefore, fitting a thermostatic radiator valve on all radiators is now considered 'Good Practice' on all new heating installations, as the TRV can be set to suit the homeowners' needs, with different rooms set to different temperatures, meaning no excess waste.

"Quality valves, like Comap's S2 and Westherm 5, feature minimum settings and frost protection, as well as the ability to accurately set, lock and limit the temperature range, which is vital for excellent energy efficiency.

“By installing the correct heating controls, educating their customers on how to use them properly, and advising them to reduce the time that the heating is used every day, heating engineers can help consumers cut energy consumption – both helping the environment and cutting household costs by up to 17%.

“However, for today’s style conscious consumer, strong environmental credentials and money-saving benefits simply aren’t enough. Aesthetics are playing an ever increasing role in the TRV market for end-users who take pride in every last detail of their homes. In the last five years or so, we’ve seen an important shift away from flat panel radiators, to ones that make a real design statement, whether that’s traditional cast iron style, sleek chrome, or ladder radiators. In fact, steel panel radiators steal the largest share of the UK market with sales of 8.2m in 2004: indeed, around 81% of all valves sold are fitted to new steel panel radiators.

“With such a focus on style in radiator market, it’s only natural that the look of accessories followed suit.

“Another important factor in the growth of the TRV market is the ever increasing popularity of heated towel rails: the market is now worth £33 million annually and accounts for 16 per cent of the accessories market. This year over 1 million towel warmers are expected to be sold. In the bathroom, as with the rest of the home, thermostatic radiator valves have overtaken the use of manual valves. And it’s vital that their look complements the current trend for sleek, contemporary bathrooms.

“Comap’s liquid sensor S2 TRV was developed to reflect this market shift: its compact white and chrome temperature control head make it unobtrusive and ergonomic, yet supremely stylish and ideal for any radiator or towel warmer. A dual flow TRV, the S2 can be fitted on either the flow or the return of the radiator – a feature that’s made a big impact on the TRV market.

“Precision temperature setting is always a driving factor in the TRV market. Currently, ultra-sensitive liquid sensor TRVs account for 58% of the market, whilst wax filled TRVs also hold an important 40% share. Comap features both the W5 wax filled TRV and the S2 liquid sensor in its product range. Both valves are designed and manufactured in Comap’s state-of-the-art factory in Abbeville, France are

constructed to the very highest technical specifications and hold a five year guarantee.”

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