

Q15

Are there controls on the production of ozone-depleting substances?

Yes, the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances are controlled under a 1987 international agreement known as the “Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer” and by its subsequent Amendments and adjustments. The Protocol, now ratified by all 196 United Nations members, establishes legally binding controls on national production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances (ODSs). Production and consumption of all principal ODSs by developed and developing nations will be almost completely phased out before the middle of the 21st century.

Montreal Protocol. In 1985, a treaty called the *Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer* was signed by 20 nations in Vienna. The signing nations agreed to take appropriate measures to protect the ozone layer from human activities. The Vienna Convention was a framework agreement that supported research, exchange of information, and future protocols. In response to growing concern, the *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer* was signed in 1987 and, following sufficient country ratification, entered into force in 1989. The Protocol has been successful in establishing legally binding controls for developed and developing nations on the production and consumption of halogen source gases known to cause ozone depletion. Halogen source gases containing chlorine and bromine controlled under the Montreal Protocol are referred to as ozone-depleting substances (ODSs). National consumption of an ODS is defined as the amount that production and imports of the substance exceed its export to other nations. The Protocol provisions are structured for developed countries to act first and for developing countries to follow with some financial assistance. In 2009, the Montreal Protocol became the first international treaty to achieve universal ratification by all 196 United Nations members.

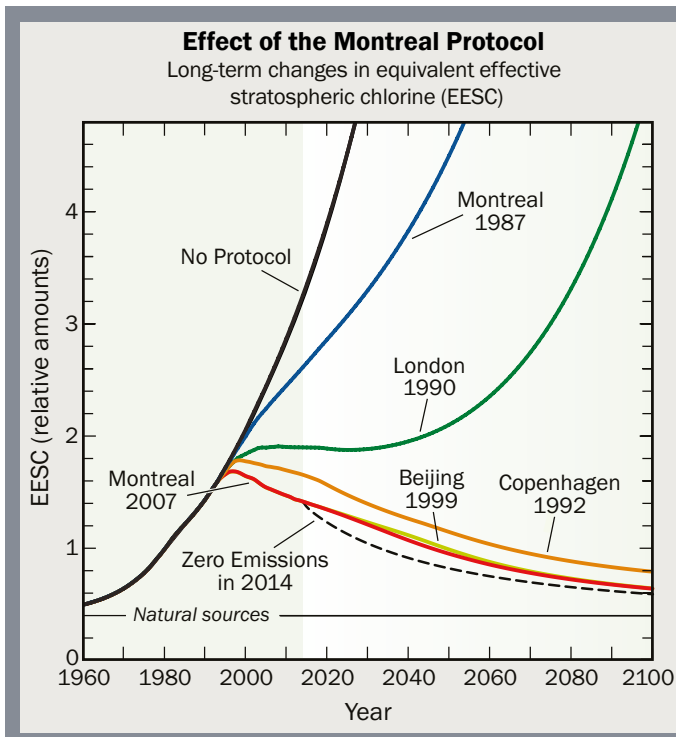


Figure Q15-1. Effect of the Montreal Protocol.

The objective of the Montreal Protocol is the protection of the ozone layer through control of the global production and consumption of ODSs. Projections of the future abundances of ODSs expressed as equivalent effective stratospheric chlorine (EESC) values (see Q16) are shown separately for the midlatitude stratosphere for (1) no Protocol provisions, (2) the provisions of the original 1987 Montreal Protocol and some of its subsequent Amendments and adjustments, and (3) zero emissions of ODSs starting in 2014. The city names and years indicate where and when changes to the original 1987 Protocol provisions were agreed upon (see Figure Q0-1). EESC is a relative measure of the potential for stratospheric ozone depletion that combines the contributions of chlorine and bromine from ODS surface observations (see Q16). Without the Protocol, EESC values are projected to have increased significantly in the 21st century. Only with the Copenhagen (1992) and subsequent Amendments and adjustments did projected EESC values show a long-term decrease.

Amendments and adjustments. As the scientific basis of ozone depletion became more certain after 1987 and substitutes and alternatives became available to replace ODSs, the Montreal Protocol was strengthened with Amendments and adjustments. Each Amendment is named after the city in which the meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol took place and by the year of the meeting. The timeline in Figure Q0-1 shows some of the major decisions that have been adopted in the last three decades. These decisions have put additional ODSs under control, accelerated the timing of existing control measures, and prescribed phase-out dates for the production and consumption of certain gases. The initial Protocol called for a 50% reduction in chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) production and a freeze on halon production. The 1990 London Amendment called for a phase-out of the production and consumption of the most damaging ODSs in developed nations by 2000 and in developing nations by 2010. The 1992 Copenhagen Amendment accelerated the phase-out date to 1996 in developed nations. Further controls on ODSs were agreed upon in later meetings in Vienna (1995), Montreal (1997, 2007), and Beijing (1999).

Influence of the Montreal Protocol. Montreal Protocol controls are based on several factors that are considered separately for each ODS. The factors include (1) the effectiveness in depleting ozone in comparison with other substances (see Ozone Depletion Potential, ODP, in Q18), (2) the availability of suitable substitutes for domestic and industrial use, and (3) the potential impact of controls on developing nations. The influence of Montreal Protocol provisions on stratospheric ODS abundances can be demonstrated with long-term changes in *equivalent effective stratospheric chlorine* (EESC). Calculations of EESC combine the amounts of chlorine and bromine present in surface air to form a measure of the potential for ozone destruction in a particular stratospheric region on an annual basis (see definition in Q16). The long-term changes in EESC at midlatitudes are shown in Figure Q15-1 for several cases:

- **No Protocol.** Without the Montreal Protocol the production, use, and emissions of CFCs and other ozone-depleting substances is expected to have increased after 1987 with an annual growth rate of about 3% (business-as-usual scenario). As a result, EESC is projected to have increased nearly 10-fold by the mid-2050s compared with the 1980 value. Computer models of the atmosphere indicate that such high EESC values would have at least doubled global total ozone depletion between 1990 and 2010 and increased it far beyond that by midcentury. As a result, harmful UV-B radiation would have increased substantially at Earth's surface, causing damage to ecosystem health and a global rise in skin cancer and cataract cases (see Q17).
- **Montreal Protocol provisions.** International compliance with only the 1987 provisions of the Montreal Protocol and the later 1990 London Amendment would have substantially slowed the projected growth of EESC. Not until the 1992 Copenhagen Amendments and adjustments did the Protocol projections show a decrease in future EESC values. The provisions became more stringent with the Amendments and adjustments adopted in Beijing in 1999 and Montreal in 1997 and 2007. Now, with full compliance to the Protocol, most ODSs will be almost completely phased out, with some exemptions for critical uses (see Q16). Global EESC is slowly decaying from its peak value in the late 1990s and is expected to reach 1980 values in the mid-21st century. The success of the Montreal Protocol to date is demonstrated by the decline in ODP-weighted emissions of ODSs shown in Figure Q0-1. Total emissions peaked in 1987 at values about 10-fold higher than natural emissions. Between 1987 and 2014, ODS emissions from human activities have decreased by almost 80%.

- **Zero emissions.** EESC values in the coming decades will be influenced by (1) the slow natural removal of ODSs still present in the atmosphere, (2) emissions from continued production and use of ODSs, and (3) emissions from currently existing *banks* containing a variety of ODSs. ODS banks are associated with applications that involve long-term containment of halogen gases. Examples are CFCs in refrigeration equipment and insulating foams, and halons in fire-fighting equipment. New emissions are projected based on continued production and consumption of ODSs, particularly in developing nations, under existing Protocol provisions.

The zero-emissions case demonstrates the EESC values that would occur if it were possible to set all ODS emissions to zero beginning in 2014. This would eliminate the contributions from new production and bank emissions. Significant differences from the Montreal 2007 projections are evident in the first decades following 2014 because the phase-out of all ODS production under the Protocol is not yet complete and bank emissions are substantial. Zero emissions would bring forward the return of EESC to 1980 levels by about 13 years.

HCFC substitute gases. The Montreal Protocol provides for the use of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) as transitional, short-term substitute compounds for ODSs with higher ODPs, such as CFC-12. HCFCs are used for refrigeration, in making insulating foams, and as solvents, all of which were primary uses of CFCs. HCFCs are generally more reactive in the troposphere than other ODSs because they contain hydrogen (H) in addition to chlorine, fluorine, and carbon. HCFCs are 88 to 98% less effective than CFC-12 in depleting stratospheric ozone because their chemical removal occurs primarily in the troposphere (see ODPs in Table Q7-1). This removal protects stratospheric ozone from most of the halogen content of HCFC emissions. In contrast, CFCs and some other ODSs release all of their halogen content in the stratosphere because they are chemically inert in the troposphere (see Q6).

Under the provisions of the Montreal Protocol, developed and developing countries may continue to use HCFCs as ODS substitutes in the coming decades before they are ultimately phased out. In the most recent adjustment to the Protocol (Montreal 2007), the phase-out of HCFCs for all Parties was accelerated so that it will be complete in 2030, a decade earlier than in previous provisions. In adopting this decision, the Parties reduced the contribution of HCFC emissions to both long-term ozone depletion and future climate forcing (see Q18 and Q19).

HFC substitute gases. Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are used as substitute compounds for CFCs, HCFCs, and other ODSs. HFCs contain hydrogen, fluorine, and carbon. HFCs do not contribute to ozone depletion because they contain no chlorine, bromine, or iodine. As a consequence, HFCs are not ODSs and are not subject to the provisions of the Montreal Protocol. HFCs and all ODSs are radiatively active gases that contribute to human-induced climate change based on their accumulation in the atmosphere (see Q18). HFCs are included in the basket of gases controlled by the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Kyoto Protocol is an international treaty designed to protect climate by controlling emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), HFCs, perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF₆). HFC emissions are expected to grow substantially in coming decades as the demand for their use as substitute gases and in new applications increases in developed and developing countries. The climate change contribution from future HFC emissions would be minimized if HFCs with very low Global Warming Potentials (GWPs) (less than 100) were chosen to meet the growing demand (see Q18 and Q19).