Levels of ozone had dropped so dramatically the computer did not believe its own sensors.

Specially equipped NASA U2 flights in 1987 confirmed the presence of a depletion area the size of the United States and the height of Mount Everest. As much as 97.5% of the ozone was missing at certain altitudes. Large concentrations of chlorine monoxide were also found, strongly implicating CFCs as the cause of the ozone depletion.

Environment Canada scientists observed a large thin area in the ozone layer over the Arctic which lasted at least six weeks in March and April of 1986. The Arctic thin area, unlike the Antarctic hole, which remains relatively stationary, was tracked moving from Northern Europe to Northern Canada. It appears to be following the cold polar winds. It is about one third the size of the Antarctic hole.

WHAT ARE CFCs USED FOR?

CFC and halon are generic terms used to describe a long lasting non-toxic group of compounds. They were created in the late 1920s and have been in production since the 1930s. The list of uses includes: refrigeration, foam packaging, air conditioning, solvents and foam insulation.

HCFC 22 and CFC 12 are used in refrigerators and air conditioners and are often referred to as freon which is actually a Dupont trade name. Alternative compounds and technologies are being rapidly developed to replace them.

Foam packaging and some foam insulations are made by blowing CFC 11 into plastic materials. The superinsulating foams retain CFCs in their cell structure giving a greater R factor. Alternative blowing agents are now undergoing testing although foam packaging is unnecessary.

Solvents containing CFC 113 are used for cleaning microchips and electronic equipment. Aqueous cleaning could replace most of this use of CFCs.

Sterlizing of disposable medical equipment is now done by using a mixture of CFC 12 and other chemicals. The associated chemicals are suspected carcinogens and other methods are available.

Halons are used in extinguishers for fighting fires in computer rooms, libraries, military tanks and other areas where water and fire fighting chemicals would increase the damage from a fire.
Halons are even more reactive with ozone than CFCs.

Most of the halon releases are caused by testing fire fighting equipment. Changing test proceedures could prevent most releases and alternatives are under development.

Halon use could be restricted to life-saving applications and stored halons already produced could be reserved for this use until an alternative is developed, eliminating the need for further halon production.

Greenpeace has mounted an international campaign to have the production of CFCs stopped immediately. The campaign includes lobbying governments around the world, direct action and public education.

The evidence is clear we need a 100% cut in CFCs now!