

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Refrigerant Management Program

What is the Refrigerant Management Program?

The Refrigerant Management Program is a regulatory proposal to require specific best management practices to reduce emissions of refrigerant from non-residential refrigeration systems. The proposal includes provisions similar to current federal and local regulations in effect specific to ozone-depleting substances (ODS) refrigerants and extends requirements to ODS refrigerants substitutes.

Why is the Refrigerant Management Program proposed?

- It is a board approved AB 32 Early Action Measure developed to help meet the goals of reducing CA greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.
- Addresses stationary source non-residential refrigeration, which is characterized by high leak rates and minimal oversight.
- Reduces emissions of Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC), Hydrofluorocarbon (HFC), and Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) refrigerants, which are greenhouse gases typically thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Who must comply with the proposed regulation?

The proposed regulation will affect any person who owns or operates a facility with a stationary, non-residential refrigeration system using 50 pounds or more of a high-global warming potential (GWP) refrigerant, services any appliance using a high-GWP refrigerant, or distributes or reclaims a high-GWP refrigerant.

What is a high-global warming potential refrigerant?

High-global warming potential, or high GWP, refrigerants include CFC, HCFC, and HFC refrigerants. Refrigerants that are not high-GWP include ammonia and carbon dioxide (CO₂).

What is a refrigeration system and what types of facilities use them?

A refrigeration system is any appliance that is, 1) used in the retail food and cold storage warehouse sectors, 2) used in manufacturing industries directly linked to an industrial process, or 3) used for any purpose other than comfort cooling that requires 50 pounds or more of a high-GWP refrigerant.

What are the estimated emission reductions of the proposed regulation?

The proposed regulation is estimated to reduce high-GWP refrigerant emissions by 8 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO₂E). This reduction has an equivalent climate impact of removing 1.4 million cars and light trucks from the road each year.

What are the estimated costs?

On average the proposed regulation results in a cost savings of \$2 per metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂E) in emissions reduced. The cost savings is a direct result of reduced consumption of refrigerant through the use of best management practices.

What does the proposed regulation require?

The proposed regulation requires facility registration, leak detection and monitoring, leak repair, retrofit and retirement, reporting, and recordkeeping for any person who owns or operates a facility with a stationary, non-residential refrigeration system using 50 pounds or more of a high-GWP refrigerant. Required service practices for refrigerant management are applicable to any person who services an appliance using a high-GWP refrigerant. Reporting and recordkeeping requirements are also applicable to distributors, wholesalers, and reclaimers of high-GWP refrigerants.

When does the regulation take effect?

The proposed regulation has requirements that are phased in over time depending on the largest refrigeration system used at a facility.

Refrigeration systems are categorized as:

- Large: Refrigeration systems using 2,000 pounds or more of a high-GWP refrigerant
 - Systems typically used in cold storage warehouses, manufacturing, and some supermarkets
- Medium: Refrigeration systems using 200 pounds or more, but less than 2,000 pounds, of a high-GWP refrigerant
 - Systems typically used in smaller warehouses and many supermarkets
- Small: Refrigeration systems using 50 pounds or more, but less than 200 pounds, of a high-GWP refrigerant
 - Systems typically used in some pharmacies and small grocery stores

The following requirements for facilities using applicable refrigeration systems, refrigerant distributors and refrigerant reclaimers apply on the effective date of the rule or January 1st, 2011:

- Required Service Practices applicable to the service of any high-GWP appliance
- Leak detection, monitoring, and recordkeeping
- Retrofit and retirement plans
- Refrigerant distributor, wholesaler, and reclaimer prohibitions

Refrigerant distributor, wholesaler, and reclaimer reporting requirements become effective in 2012.

Requirements for facilities using applicable refrigeration systems that are phased in include:

- Registration for Operation: Large in 2012, Medium in 2014, Small in 2016.
- Implementation Fee: Paid upon initial Registration for Operation and annual renewals - Large (\$370) and Medium (\$170). There is no fee for Small.
- Facility Reporting: Large in 2012 and Medium in 2014. No required reporting for Small.

How will the Refrigerant Management Program be enforced?

- Air Districts may adopt a rule of equivalent emission reduction benefit under local authority.
- Air Districts may enforce statewide rule under agreements with the ARB with funding provided through fees paid by facilities subject to the rule.

Will there be other regulations to reduce refrigerant emissions?

Yes. ARB is developing additional regulations or other measures to address emissions of refrigerants used for other stationary applications and motor vehicle air conditioning including: new commercial refrigeration specifications; residential refrigeration management; foam recovery and destruction; use of refrigerants with a lower global warming impact in new cars, buses, trucks, and equipment in California; recovery of refrigerant from decommissioned refrigerated shipping containers; enforcement of a federal ban on refrigerant release during servicing and dismantling; and emission reductions during professional servicing.

Where can I find out more information about the proposed regulation?

For the regulation and accompanying documents see: www.arb.ca.gov/cc/reftrack/reftrack.htm.
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