

The following is a brief guide intended to highlight the main points regarding the forthcoming withdrawal of R22 refrigerant from the market place. Full details can be found at the links provided at the end of this document. We will be happy to discuss these in detail with you, please contact us on the number at the bottom of this sheet.

Key Points

- Virgin (new) R22 will no longer be available to purchase from the 31/12/2009
- Reclaimed R22 will be available for use until 13/12/2014 (subject to availability) – this date is subject to review and is likely to be brought forward .
- The total volume of Reclaimed R22 in 2008 could only satisfy approximately 10% of the total demand for R22 in the same year.
- No new R22 based AC units have been produced since 2003. The newest R22 based AC is therefore 6 years old, the majority, significantly older. None of the equipment will still be under the manufacturer's warranty, even if regularly serviced.
- There are an estimated 750,000 AC units in the UK using R22, with a total charge of 10,000 tonnes of refrigerant. The current usage of R22 is 2,206 tonnes per annum. Therefore, approximately 20% of R22 based AC has suffered refrigerant leaks in the past year.
- There are alternate refrigerants available, commonly referred to as 'drop ins' to replace R22. These however are untested by most AC equipment manufacturers and can lead to other failures.

Implications

- Equipment using R22 will become increasingly difficult and costly to repair.
- Equipment using R22 is likely to be approaching the end of its useful life and failures are more likely than with newer equipment.
- The sourcing of both reclaimed R22 and other spare parts for the equipment will become more and more difficult, extending the repair times service providers are able to offer.
- Alternate refrigerants, 'drop ins' are untested by most manufacturers. Independent tests show that they can work, but that on older and poorly maintained equipment they can also increase the likelihood of refrigerant leaks and main component failures.

The options

- Do nothing
 - If you have R22 based AC serving non critical areas, you could wait until a failure occurs and based on the information given, at that time decide what action to take. This is NOT in contravention of the legislation.
- Plan for Critical Areas
 - Consider now the option of replacing the existing R22 refrigerant with a 'drop in' alternate. This will ensure that if additional refrigerant is needed at a later date for repair work, it will be available. It will not extend the life of any other parts of the system and in some cases could prompt failures of other components in the system.
 - Consider now the option of replacing the existing system with new R410 based equipment. This has capital cost implications but will ensure the ready supply of manufacturer recommended refrigerant and parts, should they be required. It will also provide a much more energy efficient system (up to 50% savings).
- Plan for All Areas
 - Prepare a structured approach to replacing all R22 based AC equipment. The Government can help with 100% tax relief on new energy efficient equipment purchased (Enhanced Capital Allowance) and the Carbon Trust has a fund of £51.5 million for interest free loans available for new energy efficient technologies, (considered on a case by case basis).

References

- <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/carbon/PublicSector/public-sector-loans.htm>
- <http://www.eca.gov.uk/etl?qclid=CJQCQ0qbyk5sCFaAA4wodu0-FoQ>
- http://www.ior.org.uk/ior_search.php

This document is intended to make our customers aware of the main points of the regulations, it should not be relied upon as a definitive statement of the law and is not a substitute for legal advice. Interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts and we can accept no liability for any loss resulting from reliance on this document.

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The information contained herein is correct at the time of issue, but may be subject to change without prior notice.

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