



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment,
Water, Population and Communities



FACT SHEET 17

Recovering fluorocarbon refrigerant from end of life and damaged RAC equipment: What you need to know

If you recycle, dismantle or decommission equipment such as split system and window air conditioners, domestic refrigerators and freezers and air conditioning systems in vehicles that contain fluorocarbon refrigerants, then you will need to obtain a Refrigerant Recover Transitional Licence and Restricted Refrigerant Trading Authorisation.

End of life and damaged refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) equipment, as mentioned above, is commonly handled by local councils, auto recyclers, scrap metal recyclers, auto dismantlers and demolition contractors. This type of equipment is likely to contain fluorocarbon refrigerant gas which, unless recovered correctly, will deplete the ozone layer if discharged into the atmosphere, as well as contribute to global warming. In fact, 1 kg of fluorocarbon refrigerant emissions (HFC - R410a) has the same greenhouse impact as two tonnes of carbon dioxide, which is the equivalent of running your car for six months.

Under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989* (the Act) which recognises the harmful effects of fluorocarbon refrigerant gas, it is an offence to discharge fluorocarbon refrigerant into the atmosphere, regardless of quantity. The Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995 specify that the refrigerant recovery process must be undertaken by a licensed person and the recovered refrigerant can only be recovered, stored and disposed of by an authorised business.

This fact sheet outlines the application process for businesses and persons to operate legally in the end of life or damaged RAC equipment sector.

Refrigerant Recoverer Transitional Licence

This licence will enable the holder to recover fluorocarbon refrigerant from end of life or damaged equipment, or prior to recharging of RAC equipment with a non-fluorocarbon refrigerant. Along with a completed application form and the licence application fee, a letter from the employer is also required indicating the applicant is competent to do this work. The licence application fee is \$50 and the licence needs to be renewed yearly.

If the employer is unsure of the applicant's competence, they can contact an ARC licensed technician through the business search facility on www.lookforthetick.com.au who may be able to provide the necessary training.

Restricted Refrigerant Trading Authorisation

If you are recovering fluorocarbon refrigerant, then you will need to apply for a Restricted Refrigerant Trading Authorisation. This authorisation allows organisations to recover, store and dispose of fluorocarbon refrigerant.

An applicant will need to demonstrate that appropriate equipment is available. This includes an operating recovery unit, recovery cylinder, leak detector, vacuum pump, gauges and scales. The authorisation application fee is \$100 and needs to be renewed every two years.

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How to dispose of fluorocarbon refrigerant once recovered

- Rent, buy or take on deposit a recovery cylinder from a refrigeration gas wholesaler.
- Use the cylinder to recover used and contaminated refrigerants from damaged or end of life RAC equipment.
- Return full recovery cylinders to the refrigeration wholesaler. The returned refrigerant will be weighed and you will be eligible for a credit for each kilogram of recovered refrigerant.

What happens to the refrigerant once it is disposed of?

Refrigerant Reclaim Australia (RRA), through its partnerships with refrigerant wholesalers, has 150 collection points across Australia. Through this national collection service, recovered refrigerants are transported to a secure facility in Melbourne where they are destroyed using an Australian developed plasma-arc process. This process transforms fluorocarbons into harmless salty water.

For more information and to apply, please visit www.arctick.org or call the Australian Refrigeration Council on 1300 884 483.

