



## National refrigeration and air conditioning licensing laws and the maritime sector

### New laws

A new national refrigeration and air conditioning licensing system came into force on 1 July 2005.

It affects any person who buys, sells, stores or handles ozone depleting or synthetic greenhouse gas refrigerant – including those in the maritime sector.

The new system applies a single set of licensing requirements right across Australia and replaces differing arrangements in each state and territory. It seeks to minimise avoidable emissions to the atmosphere of ozone depleting substances and synthetic greenhouse gases used as refrigerants.

People who handle\* these substances, in bulk or in equipment, are required to be licenced under the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995.

Companies or people who acquire, possess or dispose of these substances are required to hold a refrigerant trading authorisation that costs \$320 for two years. Refrigerant cannot be purchased without a valid authorisation.

#### ***It is an offence under the Regulations to:***

- handle\* a refrigerant without an appropriate refrigerant handling licence
- acquire, possess, or dispose of refrigerant without a refrigerant trading authorisation
- possess or use halon in refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) equipment without a halon special permit.

### Impact on maritime sector

Marine engineers and others in the maritime sector who handle refrigerants must comply with the laws by being licensed appropriately.

Recognising the specific nature of work at sea, the challenging operating environment and the lack of access to land-based qualified refrigeration technicians, the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Heritage is working with representatives of the maritime sector to develop a restricted refrigerant handling licence (maritime category) for work with refrigerants on vessels.

Updates on the development of a restricted licence (maritime) will be posted on the Department's web site at [www.deh.gov.au/atmosphere/ozone/rac/maritime/index.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/atmosphere/ozone/rac/maritime/index.html)

Until a new category of licence is developed, marine engineers and other maritime personnel handling refrigerants must hold a refrigeration handling licence. At a minimum, this will be a 12-month \$50 experienced persons (EP) licence. The EP licence may be the only refrigerant handling licence available for most people working in the maritime sector.

As applications for EP licences will not be accepted beyond 30 June 2006, marine engineers and other maritime personnel who handle refrigerants, should apply for one as soon as possible to avoid operating without a licence, which is illegal. Individuals already holding an EP licence may apply for a second before 1 July 2006 and this will be granted from the expiry date of the first licence.

***Application forms can be downloaded from the Australian Refrigeration Council's website [www.arctick.org](http://www.arctick.org) or by telephoning 1300 884 483 to request an application.***

\*handle a refrigerant is defined in subregulation 111(2) as to do anything with the refrigerant that carries the risk of its emission, including:

(a) decanting the refrigerant; or  
(b) manufacturing, installing, commission, servicing or maintaining RAC equipment; or  
(c) decommissioning or disposing of RAC equipment.