Australian Government
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

CoolChange
Newsletter for the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Industry

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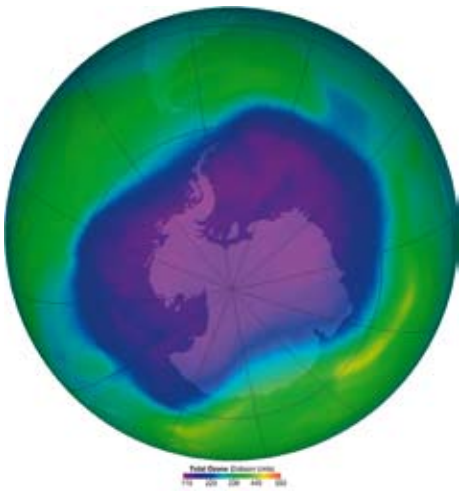
Montreal Protocol

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer sets out a mandatory timetable for the phase out of ozone depleting substances. It is considered the most successful multilateral environmental agreement in the world and its success is mainly due to commitment by governments and industry to protect the ozone layer.



Credit: NASA, Ozone Hole Watch

The licensing scheme administered by the Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) is a key obligation under the Montreal Protocol that Australia and other countries are required to implement.

The 30th meeting of the Montreal Protocol Open-Ended Working Group was held between 15 to 18 June in Geneva as a precursor to the main meeting of Montreal Protocol Parties to be held in November 2010.

The outcomes of the meeting have the potential to set the agenda of the Montreal Protocol for the next decade as governments around the world continue their efforts to protect the ozone layer while also harnessing the power of the Protocol to protect the world's climate.

The key issues raised at the meeting included:

- terms of reference for an evaluation of the Multilateral Fund (MLF)
- terms of reference for a study on the 2012 -2014 replenishment of the MLF
- proposed amendments to the Montreal Protocol, including proposals to phase-down hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) consumption under the Montreal Protocol
- potential future alternatives to hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs)
- treatment of polyols in calculating consumption of HCFCs
- essential and critical use exemptions for ozone depleting substances (ODS) already phased-out
- quarantine and pre-shipment issues of methyl bromide
- environmentally sound management of banks of ozone-depleting substances
- review of technologies for the destruction of ozone depleting substances

A more detailed account of the meeting can be accessed on the UNEP Ozone Secretariat website – **http://ozone.unep.org**

In this issue

Scope of the RHL and RTA?

The Refrigerant Handling Licences (RHL) and Refrigerant Trading Authorisations (RTA) issued by the ARC only apply to the Refrigeration and Air conditioning (RAC) equipment or systems intended to contain or already containing ODS or SGG (i.e. fluorocarbons). In Australia the overwhelming majority of RAC equipment or systems used today use ODS or SGG refrigerants and any individual working on these types of equipment or systems must possess a current RHL.

Equipment or systems that do not contain fluorocarbon based refrigerants are not covered under the regulations and do not require an ARC handling licence. However, degassing equipment or systems containing fluorocarbons either at their end-of-life (EOL) or prior to charging with a non ODS or SGG still requires an ARC licence to remove the fluorocarbon refrigerant.

If released into the atmosphere, ODS will continue to deplete the ozone layer while the SGG will continue to contribute significantly to global warming. Thankfully the collaboration between the Australian Government and the RAC industry is making a positive impact and is a leading example in reducing avoidable emissions within Australia to the benefit of Australians and the broader international community.

Trainee Licences

It is the responsibility of the trainee to apply for a trainee licence. The regulations state: "A licensee is entitled to handle refrigerant while undertaking the training or assessment for which the licence was granted …".

Individuals who are training in a classroom-only environment must obtain a classroom only trainee licence before commencing any training. Trainees who are employed or apprenticed by a business or group training company must obtain a trainee licence before handling refrigerant on-the-job or commencing training with a registered training organisation i.e. TAFE.

While it is the responsibility of the trainee to obtain a trainee licence, it is also mandatory that the holder of a Refrigerant Trading Authorisation (RTA) ensures that fluorocarbon refrigerant is handled 'by the holder of an appropriate licence granted under regulation 131, 133 or 134'. This means it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure the trainee has applied for and possesses a trainee licence.

Transitional licence arrangements for refrigerant handlers and recoverers extended

In the December 2009 edition of CoolChange the RAC industry was notified that the Refrigerant Handling Transitional Licence and Refrigerant Recoverer Transitional Licence will be replaced by the respective restricted licences by 30 November 2010. To apply for either restricted licence, an applicant was required to complete online training and assessment.

The Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts is undertaking a general review of the online training for the refrigerant handlers and recovers licences, thus creating a need for the transitional period for both licences to be extended to 30 November 2011. In the meantime, the transitional arrangements will continue as before and anyone wishing to apply for a transitional refrigerant handling or recoverer licence can do so online at **www.arctick.org**.

Managing fluorocarbon refrigerants

The licence scheme administered by the ARC is one of the management measures in place to control ozone depleting substances (ODS) and synthetic greenhouse gases (SGG) in Australia.

The national management of fluorocarbon refrigerants consists of three primary components:

Import and manufacture requirements
The Australian Government administers the import and manufacturing licence scheme through the Ozone & Synthetic Gas Team, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).
For further information go to;
www.environment.gov.au/gaslicence

Trade and handling requirements
The Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) administers a licensing scheme on behalf of the Australian Government. The ARC is a not-for-profit organisation and is responsible for granting Refrigerant Handling Licences and Refrigerant Trading Authorisations to individuals and businesses that acquire, possess, handle or dispose of fluorocarbon refrigerants. For more information go to www.arctick.org

Disposal/destruction requirements
Refrigerant Reclaim Australia (RRA) is a not-for-profit organisation created to work nationally with industry to recover, reclaim and destroy surplus and unwanted refrigerants.
For more information go to
www.refrigerantreclaim.com.au

The combination of these measures ensures Australia is:

- complying with its obligations under the Montreal Protocol for control, management and disposal of ODS and SGG
- at the forefront of global environmental best practice
- having a very real impact on minimising avoidable emissions into the atmosphere.

For further information please refer to the ARC's website at www.arctick.org or contact the ARC on 1300 88 44 83.

An Audit Every 20 Minutes

With over 7000 audits of RTA holders undertaken in the past year – that's one every 20 minutes – it is highly probable a licensed individual or business that hasn't already been through a recent audit will soon be contacted by an ARC field officer:

From top left to bottom right: Paul Fasullo – NSW, Craig Neill – NSW, Mike Gilmore – Qld, Doug Braund – Qld, Trevor Phipps – Qld, Peadar McBride – SA, Clive Shaw – Vic, Laurie Rutter – Vic, Rodney Cummings – Vic, Geoff McDavitt – WA, Kelvin Sharp – WA

In addition, field officers also conduct product surveys and assessments of pre-changed equipment upon import to Australia. They undertake audits in both major cities and in regional areas. Regional audits often blanket an entire region, auditing existing licence holders, checking local press and yellow pages advertising of RAC activity in the area before cross referencing the adverts against the ARC database, and where necessary visiting those businesses who may not be licensed.

It is more important than ever that your business is in order. Field officers are available to assist you in making sure your business complies with the law. Please do not hesitate to speak to a field officer regarding compliance of your business with the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995.

A helping hand for auto businesses

As summer approaches, auto business will see an increase in the number of air conditioning maintenance and service jobs. To help promote your business, you may be interested in accessing some of our auto air conditioning promotional materials:

Auto under bonnet service sticker – this durable sticker is perfect for recording details of the work you've conducted on a car air conditioner so you can easily find previous service information at the next service time. The information required to be recorded on the sticker complies with the Australian Automotive Code of Practice 2008.

Internal windshield auto A/C service sticker - to inform customers of their next air conditioning service data.

These two items are available for purchase from the ARC. We are not generating a profit on the sale of these items – we have produced them so that businesses can access them on a cost recovery basis.

Call the ARC on 1300 88 44 83 for more information or to place an order.

Sharing common ground with the Netherlands model

There are a number of ozone depleting substance and synthetic greenhouse gas management schemes throughout the world similar to the Australian scheme administered by the ARC.

One such scheme viewed as global best practice is the STEK scheme (the Association for the Recognition of Refrigeration Engineering Firms) in the Netherlands. The STEK and ARC schemes share many similarities including:

- the same objective of minimising avoidable emissions of ODS and SGGs
- licensing both individuals and businesses
- competency based licence assessments
- hosting of audits to ensure compliance
- regulated schemes that are supported by industry

However, there are some key differences.

- The STEK scheme has certified about 5,000 companies and 25 000 individuals since 1992 (population of the Netherlands is approximately 15 million) in contrast to the ARC scheme which includes approximately 40 000 individual licensees and 10 000 companies (on the basis of Australia's population of 22 million).
- The STEK scheme has higher compliance requirements as part of an intensive audit process based on an 18 month cycle.
- The cost for a licence under the STEK scheme is more when compared to the ARC scheme. For 80 per cent of the companies in the stationary field the annual average cost of compliance and to keep their certificate is €700 ($1009.75). For the automotive sector this used to be €375 ($540.94).

In addition individuals are required to pass a full STEK exam (theoretical and practical) to receive an appropriate qualification. The costs vary from €300 ($432.75) to €400 ($577.56). Under the ARC scheme, RTAs only cost $320 (€218.91) and RHLs $100 (€68.41).

- There is no communications strategy supporting the STEK scheme or its participants other than several manuals/guidelines, two yearly reports, quarterly bulletins and website.
- The Australian system relies on import/manufacturing licences in the first instance (front end). This is not possible for European Union countries, where free movement of goods is allowed between country borders.
- The Australian scheme relies significantly on wholesalers as point of distribution of fluorocarbon based refrigerant.
- In the Netherlands building owners are compelled to undertake specified maintenance activities on RAC equipment – the amount of maintenance is dependent on refrigerant amount.

The level of similarities exhibited by the ARC and STEK schemes is significant – demonstrating that both Australia and the Netherlands are both best practice schemes globally.

Prefer email?

If you would prefer to receive *CoolChange* via email, please email your details to **coolchange@arctick.org**

Have any of your contact details changed?

When your business contact details change, unfortunately, you don't get a checklist to make sure you notify all customers, suppliers and other business contacts of your new details. Maintaining the lines of communication is critical in today's business environment – not to mention a lawful requirement, particularly in regards to your ARC licence/s.

Changes such as phone numbers, faxes, addresses or emails, together with advice on new equipment or new licensed staff are required to be updated with the ARC. For your convenience you can update your details directly on our easy online facility at **www.arctick.org**

If you already have your user name and password simply click onto the red flashing icon at the top left hand corner of the ARC homepage Online Applications & Change of Details. If you haven't yet requested your user name and password, contact an ARC Customer Service team member on 1300 88 44 83, have your RTA or RHL number handy and you'll be given your user name and password in a matter of minutes.