

# Refrigerant management: Are you leaking money?



Figure 1. Photo of frozen section in grocery store.

## What's the problem with leaking refrigeration or air conditioning equipment?

- Refrigerants are expensive and getting more expensive with time. This takes away from your profits.
- Leaking refrigeration and air conditioning equipment is less efficient.
- Refrigerants are potent greenhouse gases, thousands of times more impactful than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), that contribute to climate change.
- Preventing and stopping leaks quickly is good for your bottom line and for the environment.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What do I do if I have a leak?

All leaks in ALL sizes of equipment with more than 50 pounds of refrigerant need to be repaired within 14 days by a U.S. EPA certified technician beginning January 1, 2024.

### How do I tell if I have a leak?

If refrigerant has to be added, it is likely that the refrigeration system is leaking. Also, if a leak inspection shows the presence of refrigerant vapors, you may have a leak.

### The temperature of my refrigeration system has risen above my set point, do I have a leak?

Yes, it is very likely that you have a leak. If you call in a technician who has to add refrigerant as a part of the repair, you probably have a leak.

### How frequently are leak inspections required in Washington State?

Equipment Charge Size	Leak Inspection Frequency	Beginning
Large ( $\geq 1,500$ lbs.)	Monthly*	January 1, 2024
Medium ( $200 \leq 1,499$ lbs.)	Quarterly	January 1, 2026
Small ( $50 \leq 199$ lbs.)	Annually	January 1, 2028

\* Large facilities must have an automatic leak detection device on all indoor equipment and conduct monthly leak inspections on all outdoor equipment.

### Do I have to be a U.S. EPA certified technician to conduct a leak inspection?

No, you don't have to be U.S. EPA certified but should be familiar with refrigeration equipment and use proper leak inspection methods such as using a handheld leak detection device (refrigerant sniffer) or using soap bubbles.

### How do I conduct a leak inspection?

Leak inspections must be conducted with a calibrated refrigerant leak detection device or a bubble test. If a Section 608 certified technician performs the leak inspection, they may use another method determined appropriate by them. All visible and accessible components of a system must be inspected.

### What do I do if I can't repair a leak within 14 days?

In specific circumstances more than 14 days are allowed to complete the repairs. Keep written records to document the conditions to justify an allowance of more than 14 days to complete the repairs.

- 45 days are allowed for the completion of the repair if one or more of the conditions apply:
  - A certified technician is not available; OR
  - The parts necessary to repair the leak are unavailable (documentation from the vendor must be retained); OR
  - The leak repair requires an industrial process shutdown that results in ceasing production.
- 120 days are allowed for the completion of the repair if all of the following conditions apply:
  - The facility is subject to the Mandatory Greenhouse Gas Reporting requirements; AND
  - The refrigeration system is an industrial process refrigeration system; AND
  - The leak repair requires an industrial process shutdown that results in a process temporarily ceasing to manufacture the intermediate or final product.
- An indefinite time period is allowed to complete the repair if the refrigerant is evacuated and the system is mothballed, or if the leaking component is isolated from the system.

### How do I know if the leak has been repaired?

An initial verification test by a U.S. EPA certified technician upon completion of any leak repair and before any additional refrigerant is added to the system. If the verification test is unsuccessful, you have one additional leak repair time period, equal in time to the first, to repair the leak and conduct another verification test to confirm the repair was successful.

Please note: If a system was evacuated to make the repair, a follow-up verification test must be performed within 14 days of the system returning to normal operations.

### How do I register my equipment?

Visit: <https://ecology.wa.gov/HFC-RMP>

### Related Information

- <https://ecology.wa.gov/HFC-rule>
- <https://ecology.wa.gov/HFC-guidebook>



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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at [ecyADAcoordinator@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:ecyADAcoordinator@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341