DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Staying cool and compliant

Focus on: Room air conditioners and residential dehumidifiers

Staying cool while protecting the climate

New Washington rules help reduce the environmental impact of room air conditioners and residential dehumidifiers. Here's what to know, and what to do. You have a role to play.

Applies to manufacturers, retailers, and installers

This information is for manufacturers, retailers, installers, and others who sell or work with room air conditioners or residential dehumidifiers in Washington.

Understanding room air conditioners and residential dehumidifiers

People use room air conditioners and residential dehumidifiers to stay comfortable and keep their indoor air clean. In Washington, these appliances must follow state rules about hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). HFCs are refrigerants that can harm the climate even more than carbon dioxide. Washington law limits them based on how much they contribute to climate change, also known as their global warming potential (GWP).

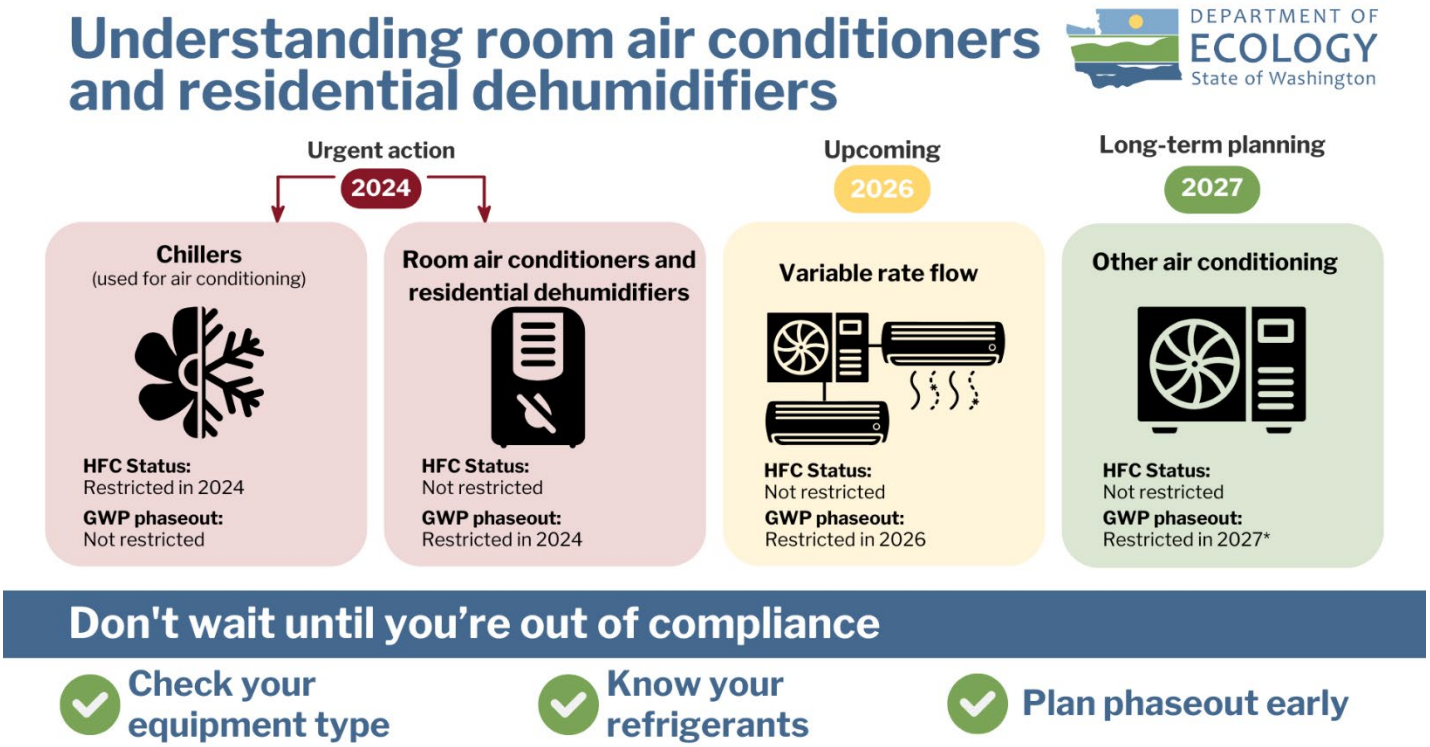


Figure 1: Washington is phasing out some refrigerants in air conditioners and dehumidifiers.

Starting in 2024, the rule applies to new room air conditioners and residential dehumidifiers. Check your equipment and refrigerants now to stay on track. You don't need to convert equipment. This is more about what you sell. If you're a business, make sure the new products you're selling are compliant.

HFC restrictions and prohibited refrigerants

Washington doesn't allow certain refrigerants with high GWP in new room air conditioners and dehumidifiers. You can find a list in WAC 173-443-040. Refrigerants with a GWP greater than 750 cannot be used in these products. This rule applies to equipment made on or after January 1, 2024. It includes common HFCs like R-410A.

Which products do these rules apply to?

These rules apply to the products defined in WAC 173-443, which are listed below:

Room air conditioner

A room air conditioner is a self-contained unit that cools a single room or space. This includes:

- Window units
- Wall units
- Packaged Terminal Air Conditioners (PTACs)
- Packaged Terminal Heat Pumps (PTHPs)
- Portable air conditioners

Residential dehumidifier

A residential dehumidifier is a self-contained, electrically operated, portable device that:

- Has a refrigerated surface (evaporator) to condense moisture
- Uses a refrigeration system with an electric motor
- Has an air circulating fan
- Has a way to collect and drain the water.

What to do if you sell or install these appliances

If you manufacturer, sell, lease, or install room air conditioners or residential dehumidifiers in Washington, you must:

- Use refrigerants with a GWP of 750 or less in new equipment
- Check the manufacture date, not the sale or installation date, to know if the rules apply
- Label and document refrigerants used in appliances as required under WAC 173-443-075
- Keep records to show compliance with restrictions on refrigerants and make them available upon request by Ecology

Selling or installing pre-2024 equipment

Equipment that was made on or after January. 1, 2024 cannot be sold or installed if it uses refrigerants with a GWP over 750. You can still use or install equipment made before that date. However, we encourage businesses to switch to newer, climate-friendly options.

What these rules are for

HFCs are potent greenhouse gases that add to climate change. In fact, they have a stronger effect on the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Cutting emissions from appliances helps protect the climate. Washington is moving towards safer and cleaner cooling options.

Refrigerant recycling resources

Not sure what refrigerant your equipment uses or how to recycle old units? Call 1-800-Recycle or visit 1800recycle.wa.gov for help. The 1-800-Recycle can connect you to local recycling options and answer your disposal questions.

HFC Team
HFC@ecy.wa.gov
360-407-6800

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6800 or email at Heather.Curtis@ecy.wa.gov, or visit https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341