



Keeping it cool and climate friendly

Focus on: Small-charge commercial refrigeration HFC restrictions

How small refrigeration systems impact the climate

Some commercial refrigeration systems use chemicals called hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) to absorb and release heat. These gases can be thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide; and when they leak, they contribute directly to climate change by trapping heat in the atmosphere. Regulating these commercial refrigerants helps protect our climate by curbing a major source of emissions.

Understanding the restriction

[Washington law](#) restricts the use of select high global warming potential (GWP) refrigerants in new small commercial refrigeration systems. This includes small-charge commercial refrigeration systems using 50 lbs. or less of refrigerant. You can still use and service existing equipment, but new equipment needs to meet the requirements in [WAC 173-443-040](#), Table 1.

This applies to common refrigeration equipment like:

- Cold storage warehouses
- Supermarket systems
- Remote condensing units
- Stand-alone medium-temperature units (isolated units above 32°F)
- Stand-alone low-temperature units (isolated units at or below 32°F)

For complete lists of restricted refrigerants and acceptable alternatives, see [WAC 173-443-040](#), Table 1 or the [EPA SNAP program](#). These resources provide details on which refrigerants are prohibited and which lower-GWP options may be used.

Refrigerant restrictions in new and retrofit refrigeration equipment

Refer to [WAC 173-443-040](#) Table 1 for full details. For refrigerant-specific information, see EPA's SNAP program.

Not restricted

- Using existing refrigeration units in good working condition
- Certified technicians repairing or recharging existing equipment with the same refrigerant
- Installing new units that use approved low-GWP alternatives (many manufacturers already offer compliant equipment)

Restricted

- Installing new refrigeration systems with restricted refrigerants (as listed in WAC 173-443-040 Table 1)
- Retrofitting older systems with restricted refrigerants
- Selling or installing a restricted unit manufactured on or after the effective date for its end use

For refrigerant lists and acceptable alternatives, visit the [EPA SNAP Program's website](#).

Compliance Requirements

For new equipment (manufactured on or after the effective date):



Only use the allowed refrigerants for each end use



Check manufacture date on new equipment



Keep records of refrigerant used and equipment detail for inspection by Ecology

For more information visit: ecology.wa.gov/hfc

Figure 1: Compliance requirement for new equipment manufactured on or after the effective date.

Myth vs. Fact

Myth: You need to replace all the current refrigeration units.

Fact: You can continue using current units if they are in good condition. The rule only applies to new units.

Myth: You can't use any refrigerant with high GWP.

Fact: There are select refrigerants which can't be used for units using less than 50 pounds of refrigerant. There is no blanket GWP limit for the end uses in Table 1.

Refrigerant recycling resources

Not sure what refrigerant your unit uses or how to recycle old units? Call 1-800-Recycle or visit 1800recycle.wa.gov for help.



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 HFC@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341