Chill our climate by following the chiller restrictions

Focus on: Chillers used for air conditioning

Washington's restrictions: Chillers used for air conditioning

Chillers used for air conditioning use hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) which are harmful greenhouse gases. These short-lived "**super pollutants**" can be thousands of times more potent than carbon dioxide. It is important that we reduce their emissions to protect our climate. The good news is that a variety of climate-friendly, energy-efficient alternatives already exist!

Understanding the restriction

Washington law restricts the use of certain high Global Warming Potential (GWP) refrigerants, like R-134a, R-410a, and R-404a, in **new** chillers used for air conditioning. For a full list of restricted refrigerants, check the Air Conditioning category under End-Use in the Prohibited substances for new products and equipment, Table 1 in WAC 173-443-040.

Who does this apply to?

This law applies to:

- manufacturers
- retailers
- installers
- and others who sell or work with chillers used for air conditioning in Washington

Key definitions: Chillers used for air conditioning

Chillers

A chiller:

- Is a machine that cools a liquid that cools buildings
- Can be water, air, or evaporatively cooled
- When a chiller is used to cool the air inside a building. It is considered air conditioning under WAC 173-443

Air conditioning equipment

Air conditioning equipment includes stationary systems that control:

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Distribution in buildings

Restrictions on chillers used for air conditioning

End-use	Restriction effective date
Centrifugal chillers (cooling only)	Jan. 1, 2024
Positive displacement chillers (cooling only)	Jan. 1, 2024
Centrifugal chillers (heating or cooling)	Jan. 1, 2025
Positive displacement chillers (heating or cooling)	Jan. 1, 2025

Table 1: End use and corresponding effective date for restrictions on chillers used for air conditioning.

Not restricted

- Using new chillers with approved refrigerants
- Using and servicing existing chillers that use restricted refrigerants listed in WAC 173-443-040, Table 1
- A certified technician recharging existing chillers with the same restricted refrigerant

Restricted

- Installing new chillers used for air conditioning with restricted refrigerants
- Retrofitting new equipment to use restricted refrigerants
- Manufacturing, buying, importing, or selling new chillers used for air conditioning on or after their corresponding effective date, that uses restricted refrigerants

How the rule affects existing chiller equipment

If you already have chillers in place, you can continue using them as long as they are in good condition. The rule applies only to newly purchased units.

Refrigerants allowed under the rule

Most refrigerants can still be used. A specific refrigerants are prohibited for equipment that contains less than 50 pounds of refrigerant, but there is no broad GWP limit for the affected end uses.

Additional information

- For information on chillers used for refrigeration please refer to Focus Sheet: Large commercial refrigeration
- Systems with 50+ lbs. of refrigerant with GWP ≥ 150 are subject to our Refrigerant Management Program (RMP). This includes:
  - Registration
  - Leak management
  - Reporting
  - Recordkeeping

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