EPA's Refrigerant Recycling Rule

SafetyNet #: 1

A. Summary
In 1993, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established regulations under Section 608 [1] of the Clean Air Act to prohibit the knowing release of ozone-depleting and substitute refrigerants during the course of maintaining, servicing, repairing, or disposing of appliances or industrial process refrigeration. These regulations prohibit the uncontrolled release of ozone depleting substances from refrigeration equipment, which includes the requirement that refrigerant be properly removed from equipment prior to disposal.

B. Disposal
To dispose of, or salvage, refrigeration equipment (i.e. air conditioners, growth chambers, refrigerators, or freezers), the refrigerant and compressor oil must be properly managed, and must follow the requirements for decontamination of laboratory equipment, as outlined in SafetyNet #113 [2]. Campus departments should submit a service request with Aggie Surplus at http://afs.ucdavis.edu/our_services/distribution-services/aggie-surplus/service-request-form.html [3] to initiate disposal of equipment. Aggie Surplus will pick up the equipment, and arrange for proper removal and disposal of refrigerants and oils, as necessary. The department will be recharged for the cost of pickup, removal of materials, and disposal. If the equipment is marketable, there will not be a charge for refrigerant/oil removal.

C. Requirements
Section 608 has the following requirements (mostly applicable to maintenance personnel):

- Service practices that maximize recycling of ozone-depleting substances, must be implemented during the servicing and disposal of air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment.

- All technicians performing maintenance, recycling or recovery of refrigerant must be certified.

- Sale of refrigerant is restricted to certified technicians only.

- Persons or organizations that service or dispose of air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment must certify to the EPA that they have acquired recycling or recovery equipment, and are complying with the requirements of the rule.
Substantial leaks in air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment with a charge of greater than 50 pounds must be monitored and repaired.

- Record-keeping must be performed to demonstrate compliance with regulations.

Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) coordinates with staff from Facilities Managements’ Refrigeration Shop to ensure that the campus is in compliance with these regulations. The EPA has multiple fact sheets on the Refrigerant Management Regulations on their website. More information can be found on the EPA’s Refrigerant Management Program website.

Contact

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More information

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1. Release of Equipment

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Links
[5] https://www.epa.gov/section608