

R-22 Phaseout and Retrofits

In less than 2 years R-22 will be banned from further production and import, which will affect the current supply available for the remainder of this year and next year, most likely resulting in rising costs for the remaining R-22 supply available. Last year we saw dramatic price increases and fluctuations and we anticipate that was only the beginning, with unknown and unstable future price increases expected.

What is the Phaseout? In 1993, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a phase out of the production and import of ozone-depleting substances (ODS), consistent with the schedules developed under the Montreal Protocol. According to the phaseout schedule, in regards to HCFC-22 or R-22, by January 1, 2020 there will be no production or import of R-22. R-22 will still be in existence after the 2020 production ban but will only be available in stock piles or reclaimed form (used refrigerant reprocessed to the standards of new refrigerant). A large percentage of R-22 units still have several years of useful life and will live through the ban and into this unknown pricing market. Good capital budgeting in evaluating your situation will help address your particular needs.

What are the next steps? As the weather heats up, so will the demand for R-22 and along with it a drastic increase in price. Moving forward there are three options: (1) retrofit your existing system for use with an alternative refrigerant, (2) replace your system or (3) continue to operate your existing system. Retrofitting your existing system to another compliant refrigerant substitute may not be a solution for all equipment or processes and will involve added costs and evaluation and may result in reduced efficiency. Replacing existing equipment with compliant, readily available equipment may require more money initially but may reduce your electricity bill and save money over time.

Being proactive and reviewing your options to arrive at a best fit solution will help reduce unexpected costs and possible loss of cooling or comfort. Contact First Point Mechanical and let us help assist you in staying compliant with recoveries, retrofits, replacements and record keeping.

Resources:

<https://www.epa.gov/ods-phaseout/what-phaseout-ozone-depleting-substances>

<https://www.epa.gov/ods-phaseout/commercial-refrigeration-and-air-conditioning-equipment-frequently-asked-questions>

<https://www.epa.gov/section608/stationary-refrigeration-resources-businesses>

<https://www.achrnews.com/articles/131698-r---phaseout-slashes-supply-to--m-pounds>