

AREMA Refrigerant Policy Statement.

AREMA members are acutely aware of the need to minimise the emissions of all refrigerants to atmosphere, and particularly the need to minimise the emissions of high-GWP fluorocarbons.

Low GWP refrigerants, comprising both natural refrigerants and new generation synthetic refrigerants will play an increasingly important role in improving the overall environmental performance of refrigeration and air conditioning equipment. The long-term sustainability of the industry requires the adoption of low-GWP refrigerants, along with a continuing focus on improving energy efficiency.

While there is considerable progress in some applications, there remains a range of critical applications where HFCs are still required. Industry is working hard to find practical low-GWP alternatives for these applications, and we can anticipate continuing technical developments over coming years.

AREMA believes that a measured and predictable process, such as we have experienced with the move away from ozone-depleting refrigerants, will enable the transition to low-GWP refrigerants in the most effective manner.

In order to maximise the appropriate take-up of natural refrigerants, specific issues surrounding training and certification of technicians need to be addressed. The challenges posed by significantly higher pressures, flammability and toxicity can be minimised by sound training and certification processes. This is particularly important to equipment manufacturers, who have specific legal and moral responsibilities for the safety of their products.

This responsibility also demands that equipment must use the refrigerant it was designed for.

Any unauthorised (that is, without the manufacturers written agreement) retrofit to a different refrigerant places manufacturers at considerable risk. Accordingly, AREMA is strongly opposed to the unauthorised retrofit of equipment on occupational health and safety grounds.