

Best Practice for Convenience Retailers

What is F-Gas Regulation?

From 1st January 2020, the EU Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases Regulation (also known as the EU F-Gas Regulation) will ban the use of refrigerants with a Global Warming Potential (GWP) of 2,500 or more in certain refrigeration units. It will also ban refrigeration technicians from servicing these units.

All retailers, including convenience stores, are required to comply with the EU F-Gas Regulation.

The Regulation will also phase down the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) that can be sold in the EU by 79% by 2030. This means that some refrigerants (including the most common refrigerant R404a) will become increasingly harder to obtain and more expensive.

Who is Affected by the Regulation?

Retailers who have refrigeration units in the following categories will need to check whether they need to comply with the Regulation:

- Small hermetically sealed systems, e.g. ice cream freezers, bottle coolers, stand-alone retail displays that typically contain between 0.1 and 0.5 kg of refrigerant. However, these systems are likely to be unaffected by the service ban.
- Condensing units, used in small shops, convenience stores and food service. These are medium sized systems with one or two refrigerated display units cooled by a condensing unit typically containing between 2 and 10 kg of refrigerant.
- Central pack systems, used in supermarkets and other large stores. They typically contain more than 100kg of refrigerant.

Refrigeration units which contain HFCs amounting to over 40 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent (e.g. 10kg of R404a - which is one of the most common refrigerants) are affected by the service ban.

Defra and the Environment Agency have produced an [online tool](#) to help you calculate the CO₂ equivalent of your refrigerant. Alternatively, ask your refrigeration manufacturer or certified maintenance technician if your refrigeration units are affected by the Regulation.

What Do Retailers Need to Do?

Ahead of the ban on 1st January 2020, retailers should identify whether the refrigerant they are using will be affected by the Regulation and if so, consider what refrigerant solution to choose for their refrigeration unit in order to be compliant.

This could mean:

- Switching current refrigerants with reclaimed and recycled HFC (which are exempt from the ban but only until 2030)
- Switching to lower GWP refrigerants by either retrofitting your existing refrigeration system OR replacing your current refrigeration system with new equipment

To decide which option is best for your business, you should consult your refrigeration technician.

Best Practice for Convenience Retailers (part two)

If you decide to replace your refrigeration system, the government has schemes to help support with the cost, including:

- The Enhanced Capital Allowance scheme which allows businesses to write off the whole cost of the equipment against taxable profits in the year of purchase, if the equipment purchased is specified on the [Energy Technology List \(ETL\)](#).
- The [Scottish Government SME Loan Scheme](#) is also available for the installation of energy efficient measures.

What Happens If I Don't Comply?

Retailers who do not comply with the ban could face fines of up to £200,000.

For More Information

For more information about the changes you need to make to your refrigeration equipment to comply with the F-Gas Regulation, you should consult with your refrigeration technician.

Additional guidance about the F-Gas Regulation is also available at:

- Defra and Environment Agency guidance for users, producers and traders on the requirements of the 2014 EU fluorinated greenhouse gas (F gas) Regulation, [available here](#).
- Read the European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE) leaflet "[Stay in Business: Stop installing R404A/R507A!](#)" or watch their [animation on the regulations here](#).

If you have any specific questions about the Regulation, please contact
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