

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT R-410A



JEFF TIPTON 480-216-9966
AIMEE BURRELL 480-216-2644

www.TheTiptonTeam.com

**RE/MAX Power Realty
7529 S. Power Rd # 101
Queen Creek, AZ 85242**

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What You Need to Know About the New R-410A Refrigerant for A/C Systems

Beginning January 1, 2010 the EPA requires R-410A (also known by the brand names Puron®, SUVA® and GENTRON AZ-20®) refrigerant in air conditioning and heat pump systems. This means that all new air conditioning and heat pump equipment produced in or imported to the U.S. must use R-410A or another non-ozone depleting refrigerant.

- Why is this happening?

The release of HCFCs (hydrochlorofluorocarbons) into the atmosphere has depleted the Earth's protective ozone layer, and created an ozone hole. This will help restrict the release of this manmade chemical and others that deplete this layer and help it to recover. This is a worldwide initiative.

- What is HWA going to do regarding the recent R-410A regulation?

1. Air conditioners and heat pumps that use R-22 can still be serviced and repaired and R-22 will still be available for use in equipment that was manufactured prior to January 1, 2010.
2. When a replacement system is necessary, a system can still be replaced with R-22 equipment as long as it is available. There is no ban on the sale of R-22 equipment, the new regulation only requires manufacturers to produce R-410 equipment.
3. When R-22 equipment is no longer available HWA will replace the failed system with R-410A equipment.
4. Home warranty plans do not typically cover the modifications required to upgrade A/C or Heat Pump systems to R-410A refrigerant. HWA offers R-410A modification coverage on every contract and with this coverage, up to \$500 can be used to upgrade the system.

Note: The price of these phased out coolants and R-22 system parts will continue to rise as their availability decreases, and may take longer to acquire.

HWA has you covered. See below for more information about these changes.

FAQS

- What air conditioning and heat pump systems may be affected?

R-22 and HCFC-22 can be found in window units, dehumidifiers, central air conditioners, air-to-air heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, and ductless air conditioners.

- How can I find out if my home air-conditioner contains R-22?

Most air-conditioners have a nameplate on the unit that identifies the refrigerant it contains and other information, such as safety certifications and electrical ratings. For a central air-conditioner, the nameplate



is usually on the outdoor condensing unit. If a nameplate is not provided, there are several other ways that you may be able to obtain the information. You could check your owner's manual for the information. The person/company that sold or services your air conditioner would likely know what refrigerant it uses. Or, if you know the manufacturer and model number, you could call the manufacturer or check its web site.

- Will I be required to stop using R-22 in my home air-conditioner or other equipment?

No. You will not be required to stop using R-22 and you will not be required to replace existing equipment just to switch to a new refrigerant. The lengthy phaseout period provides time to switch to ozone-friendly refrigerants when you normally would replace your air-conditioner or other equipment. This transition is important because supplies of R-22 will be more limited after 2010, which may cause the price of R-22 to increase. Starting in 2020, new R-22 may no longer be produced, so consumers will need to rely solely on recycled or reclaimed quantities to service any systems still operating after that date.

- What if I own an air conditioner that needs R-22 added after 2010?

You may continue to have your equipment containing R-22 serviced after 2010, although only a limited amount of new R-22 will be manufactured (to meet the servicing needs of equipment manufactured before January 1, 2010). After 2020, production of R-22 will be prohibited and only recovered, recycled, or reclaimed supplies of R-22 will be available for servicing existing equipment. So, in the future, R-22 supplies will be more limited and costs may rise.

- Are alternatives to R-22 available?

Yes, alternative refrigerants that do not harm the ozone layer are available and widely used in the air-conditioning and refrigeration industry today. Through its Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) Program, EPA has found acceptable a number of alternatives to R-22 that do not deplete the ozone layer. R-410A, an HFC refrigerant blend, is the most common. Some common trade names for R-410A include GENETRON AZ-20®, SUVA 410A®, Forane® 410A, and Puron®. EPA maintains a full list of acceptable substitutes for household and light commercial air-conditioning.

- I own an air-conditioning unit that contains R-22 and I want to minimize its impacts on the ozone layer. What can I do?

If you have equipment that contains R-22, the most important thing you can do is to maintain your unit properly. Major leaks rarely develop in units that are properly installed and maintained; however, appropriate servicing is necessary to minimize potential environmental damage and maintenance costs. For more information on what regular service your unit requires, please consult your owner's manual or contact the company that sold or services your unit.

It is important to select a reliable service contractor. Technicians must have EPA certification to service equipment containing R-22. It is illegal to intentionally vent (release) any refrigerant when making repairs. Therefore, technicians are required to use refrigerant recovery equipment during service. Also, request that service technicians locate and repair leaks instead of "topping off" leaking systems. This will help ensure that your system operates at its optimal level, which reduces emissions of refrigerant and saves you money by reducing your household energy use and avoiding additional repairs in the future.

For more information and FAQs on the new R-410A regulations and how they affect you, please visit the EPA's website at www.epa.gov/ozone.