



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Energy

## Environment takes action on synthetic greenhouse gas offenders

Department of the Environment and Energy

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Department of the Environment and Energy has recently fined two companies and an individual for offences under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*.

A New South Wales-based company has been fined \$12,600 for importing a bus with an air conditioning system containing HFC-134a, a synthetic greenhouse gas, without an appropriate licence.

HFC-134a is a hydrofluorocarbon – a type of synthetic greenhouse gas commonly used as a refrigerant in refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment, including in vehicles.

Synthetic greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere, and HFC-134a has a global warming potential of 1,430, meaning it traps 1,430 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.

The import into Australia of equipment containing these substances is prohibited unless the correct licence or exemption is held.

The company involved is a major automotive retailer and was aware of its obligations under the Act at the time it imported the bus.

A Victorian-based company has been fined \$12,600 for importing a pool heat pump containing HFC-410A without an appropriate licence. The company was unaware of its obligations under the Act.

Head of the Department's Office of Compliance, Monica Collins, said: "Reducing emissions of synthetic greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances is a priority area for the Department.

"We work with the Australian Border Force to monitor and inspect imported and exported goods to ensure compliance with the Act and where appropriate undertake enforcement activities.

"Importers and customs brokers should check import requirements for synthetic greenhouse gases or ozone depleting substances, including when they are contained in equipment, before importing or exporting goods.

"It is advisable to allow adequate time to apply for a licence or exemption as this may take up to 60 days".

A New South Wales-based refrigeration mechanic has been fined \$2,520 for discharging a scheduled substance, HFC-410A, while installing an air-conditioning system.

HFC-410A is a hydrofluorocarbon – a synthetic greenhouse gas commonly used as a refrigerant in refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment.

HFC-410A has a global warming potential of 2088, meaning it traps 2088 times more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide.

The offender holds a refrigeration and air conditioning permit issued by the Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) under the regulations to the Act and was aware of his obligations when the discharge occurred.

Ms Collins said, "The Department and ARC work together to promote voluntary compliance with the Act and its regulations.

The ARC engages widely with businesses and technicians to help them to understand and comply with their obligations. This includes the obligation not to discharge scheduled substances", said Ms Collins.

The Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989 controls the manufacture, import, export and use of a range of synthetic greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances in Australia.

Under the regulations persons and companies who acquire, possess, dispose of or handle these substances in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector are required to hold an appropriate permit.

For more information about the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989* visit [www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone](http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/ozone)