



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts**

# Product Stewardship Requirement

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Product Stewardship?

- Product stewardship is an approach that ensures that the environmental impacts of a product are responsibly managed during and at the end of the product's life.
- In the case of refrigerant gas, product stewardship centres on the recovery and destruction of gas at the end of life, either during equipment maintenance or decommissioning.
- This product stewardship licence condition is about taking responsibility for the entire lifecycle of the product imported.

### How can I meet the requirement?

- Importers cannot be physically responsible for the actual gas they import. In most cases, importers on-sell these products and the lifetime of pre-charged equipment is often many years. The way then, that an importer can manage this product stewardship responsibility, is to join a national product stewardship scheme that operates across all of Australia. By joining such a scheme, importers contribute to a mechanism for the collection and destruction of refrigerant gases, across Australia, and well in to the future.
- Licensees can consider joining the existing voluntary industry scheme, Refrigerant Reclaim Australia, joining with others to establish a scheme tailored to their needs or establishing their own scheme.

### Why must Pre-charged Equipment licencees do this?

- The import of refrigerant gas and equipment is regulated under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989* (the Act). One of the objectives of this Act is to 'promote the responsible management' of these substances 'so as to minimise their impact on the atmosphere.'
- Under Section 18(4) of the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*, it is written that 'the Minister [or delegate] may, when granting a licence or at any time afterwards impose other conditions on the licence.'

- A failure to comply with a condition imposed on your licence may result in the cancellation of the licence under section 20 of the Act. In addition, it is an offence to fail to comply with a condition, in respect of which substantial penalties apply.

### **What does the Pre-charged Equipment licence fee cover?**

- The licence fee that you have already paid is solely for administration of the licences.
- The licence fee was calculated on a cost recovery basis which means that it was calculated to cover the administration of the licences.
- The licence fee does not cover the product stewardship requirement.

### **Can Pre-charged equipment licensees join one scheme now and change later?**

- Yes. To change from one scheme to another, licensees will be required to inform the Department of Environment and Heritage of the alternative scheme (of which they are a member) while remaining a member of the scheme on the licence until DEH approves the new scheme and informs the licensee of this.

### **How does a product stewardship scheme work?**

- The voluntary industry scheme, Refrigerant Reclaim Australia, operates by charging a levy on the import of gases (ozone depleting substances or synthetic greenhouse gases) of \$2.00 plus GST a kilo for refrigerant imported (although there is a flat annual fee of \$200 plus GST for smaller importers).
- RRA then pays a fee for the return of any used ozone depleting substance (ODS) or synthetic greenhouse gas (SGG) refrigerant to tradesmen who recover this gas and return it to wholesalers (who are participants in the RRA program). The gas is then transported to RRA for destruction. This scheme, funded by importers of ODS/SGG refrigerant allows a mechanism for the responsible destruction of the product.

### **How much will this cost me?**

- The cost to licensees will vary, depending on the type of product stewardship scheme. Licensees may choose to join an existing scheme or establish a new scheme, either individually or with other importers.
- The cost of the voluntary industry scheme, Refrigerant Reclaim Australia, is \$2.00 plus GST a kilo for the import of ODS and SGG refrigerant gases. There is however a flat annual fee of \$200.00 plus GST for small importers.
- Contact Michael Bennett from RRA on 02 6230 5244 or [michael.bennett@refrigerantreclaim.com.au](mailto:michael.bennett@refrigerantreclaim.com.au) for further information.