



AIM Act Final Ruling: What it means for RETAILERS

What is the AIM Act?

The American Innovation and Manufacturing Act (AIM Act), passed in 2020 directs the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to oversee the phasedown of hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) refrigerant production and consumption and transition to alternative refrigerants. It includes a phasedown schedule that began in 2022 and continues to 2036.

In May 2026, the EPA announced its final ruling on the Technology Transition Rule, affecting several industries.

What You Need to Know

- Retailers include supermarkets, convenience stores, discount stores, etc.
- EPA will allow the repair of appliances unless the repair results in a new system
- Automatic leak detection will be required on certain new and existing equipment
- Originally, the EPA established transition deadlines beginning in 2025–2027. The May 2026 update introduces revised extended timelines, shown below.

SUBSECTOR	PRODUCTS	PRIOR REQUIREMENT (2023 RULE)		UPDATED (MAY 2026 RULE)		WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU
		GWP LIMIT ¹	COMPLIANCE DATE ²	GWP LIMIT ¹	COMPLIANCE DATE ²	
Self Contained "stand-alone unit"	Retail food- refrigeration stand-alone units	150	01/01/2025	150	01/01/2025	
Remote Condensing Units *Zero Zone Hybrid™ Display Cases*	With 200 or more lb refrigerant charge, excluding high temp side of cascade system	150	01/01/2026	150	01/01/2032	Customers need to use equipment with GWP<1400 until new compliance date
	With less than 200 lb refrigerant charge	300	01/01/2026	300	01/01/2032	
	High temp side of cascade system	300	01/01/2026	300	01/01/2032	
All Retail Systems	With 200 or more lb refrigerant charge, excluding high temp side of cascade system	150	01/01/2027	150	01/01/2032	Starting 1/127, customers need to use equipment with GWP<1400 until new compliance date
	With less than 200 lb refrigerant charge	300	01/01/2027	300	01/01/2032	
	High temp side of cascade	300	01/01/2027	300	01/01/2032	

1. GWP limite refers to GWP100 limit i.e. calculated over 100 year horizon

2. Individual State requirements may differ. Please check relevant state regulations as well.

How does this affect you?

Your current manufacturer, distributor, or installer will not be able to import, export, or sell you HFC refrigeration systems by the compliance date of your applicable subsector. For example, grocery stores will not be able to buy freezers or coolers with R-404A or R-448A.

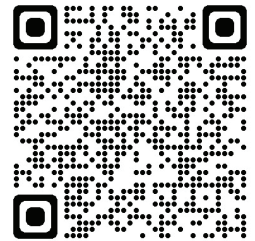
Allowable low-GWP refrigerants include CO₂, A2L, Ammonia, and Propane.

Service of Legacy Systems

This rule does not restrict customers from using their existing refrigeration systems. The EPA has allowed for an existing system to continue its operation to the end of their useful life. The systems may be serviced and repaired throughout their use, including replacing components.

The following actions are considered a new installation:

- Assembling a system for the first time from used or new components
- Increasing the compressor cooling capacity, in BTU per hour, of an existing system by **15%** of capacity at initial installation (Changed from 0% to 15% in May 2026 ruling)
- Replacing 75 percent or more of evaporators (by number) and 100 percent of the compressor racks, condensers, and connected evaporator loads of an existing system.



Read more on the EPA website

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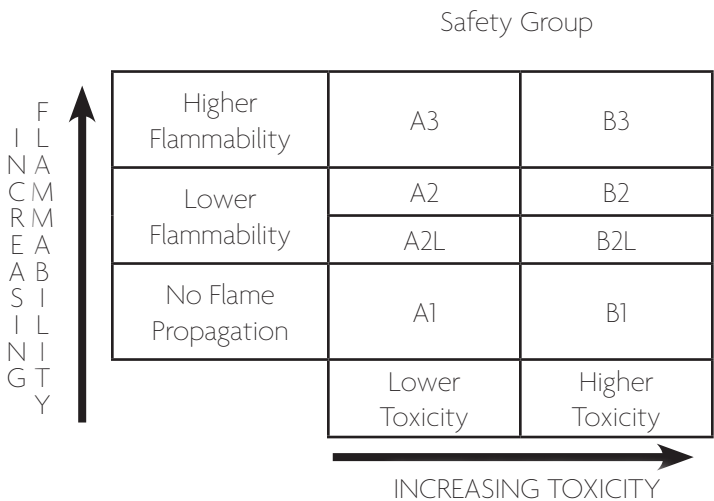


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ASHRAE Safety Designator

The safety designator has two classes: flammability and toxicity (See Figure 1). The toxicity of the refrigerant is designated with the letters "A" or "B". The least toxic refrigerants belong to the "A" group. Flammability is given at four levels: 1, 2L, 2, and 3. The 2L was added recently to indicate that the refrigerant has a low burn velocity. The flammability between 2L and 2 are the same; 2L do not burn as fast as 2.

FIGURE 1: ASHRAE Safety Group Classifications



Refrigerant Data

With the large selection of refrigerants, how do you know which one is the right one for your application? With over 60 years of experience, Zero Zone knows which one is right to solve your challenge. Below is a list of refrigerants Zero Zone uses and their common applications.

REFRIGERANT DATA				
REFRIGERANT	GWP	COMPOSITION	CLASS	TYPICAL USES
R-717	0	Ammonia	B2	Low and medium temperature refrigeration
R-744	1	CO ₂	A1	Low and medium temperature refrigeration, transport refrigeration, compact systems, direct expansion systems, indirect expansion systems, cascade systems
R-455A	145	HFO	A2L	Low and medium temperature refrigeration
R-454C	148	HFO	A2L	Air conditioners, self-contained units, low and medium temperature refrigeration
R-515B	293	HFO	A1	Chillers and heat pumps
R-513A	573	HFO	A1	Low and medium temperature refrigeration
R-449A	1,280	HFO	A1	Low and medium temperature refrigeration, centralized and distributed systems, condensing units, cold stores
R-448A	1,360	HFO	A1	Low and medium temperature refrigeration
R-134a	1,430	HFC	A1	Automotive air conditioners, medium temperature refrigeration
R-407A	2,107	HFC	A1	Low and medium temperature refrigeration
R-404A	3,920	HFC	A1	Low and medium temperature refrigeration
R-507	3,985	HFC	A1	Low and medium temperature refrigeration, flooded systems