Newsletter for the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Industry

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COOLCHANGE

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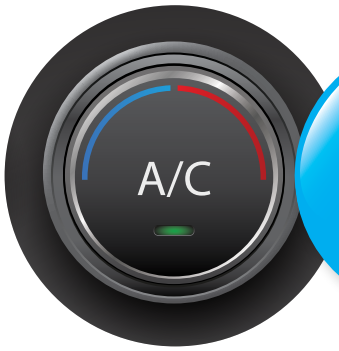

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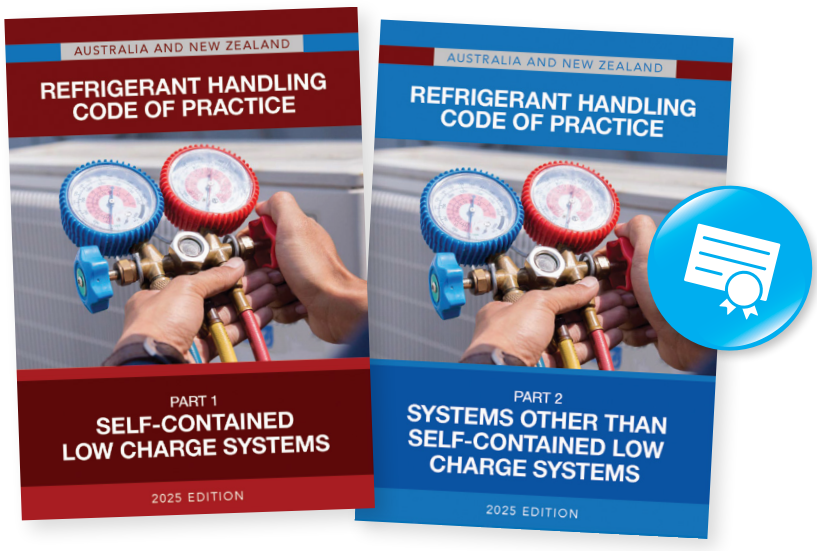
Digitised Code of Practice: Access the Codes on your mobile devices

The ARC is pleased to announce the new digital version of the stationary Australia and New Zealand Refrigerant Handling Code of Practice 2025 is now live.

With the new upgrade, technicians can now access the Codes from their mobile devices. The new HTML version has a search function and quick navigation tools. This version makes it easier for technicians to find the information they need.

This update supports ARC's commitment to improving access to information, encouraging innovation and streamlining communication. Acting CEO Susie O'Neill emphasised the elevated access and ease of use for technicians with this update. 'At ARC, we are committed to removing barriers to how information is accessed, searched and shared. This initiative shows our strategic focus on user experience as the digital version makes it easier for technicians to access the Codes – anytime, anywhere,' she said.

The digital Codes are available on the **arctick.org** website. To view the digital Codes, visit **https://arctick.org/refrigerant-handling-licence/codes-of-practice/**.



Annual indexation of RAC industry permit application fees

Application fees for refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) industry permits are indexed annually under the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995.

As of **1 January 2026**, RAC industry permit application fees **have increased by approximately 3.4 per cent**, in line with the Wage Price Index (WPI) published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The updated permit application fees for 2026 are outlined below. For more information, **click here**.

RAC Permit Type	Permit Duration	2025 Application Fee	2026 Application Fee
Refrigerant Handling Licence	1 year	$86	$89
	2 years	$172	$178
	3 years	$258	$267
Restricted Refrigerant Handling Licence	1 year	$86	$89
	2 years	$172	$178
	3 years	$258	$267
Trainee Refrigerant Handling Licence	1 year	$36	$37
Refrigerant Trading Authorisation	1 year	$271	$280
	2 years	$542	$560
	3 years	$813	$840
Restricted Refrigerant Trading Authorisation	1 year	$86	$89
	2 years	$172	$178
	3 years	$258	$267

HVACR qualifications: Initial results and call for interviews

The ARC, together with the Powering Skills Organisation (PSO), and other key industry bodies, carried out a survey in August 2025.

The aim of the survey was to review the HVACR training products. The PSO released the survey report in November 2025, highlighting the gaps and opportunities in the training system. The survey received 526 responses from a cross section of stakeholders. Key findings from the survey show opportunities around several areas, such as:

- flammable refrigerants
- electronic controls
- critical workplace skills.

Employers' and RTOs' feedback indicated a strong case for updated qualifications to meet environmental and efficiency challenges head-on.

Register your interest for an interview

ARC encourages stakeholders to participate in the next phase of reforms. In this phase, stakeholders can share their views in an online interview with the research team. These interviews will be conducted throughout January and February 2026 and will take approximately 30 minutes.

To express your interest, email Powering Skill Organisation at **training@poweringskills.com.au**

To read the full report, visit **UEE Full Training Product Review – Powering Skills Organisation**

Another successful training for MyCar

Industry guidance and education are key parts of the ARC's training program. After a successful session in 2024, ARC delivered another training session for the MyCar team in November 2025.

ARC field officer, Mark Achten, delivered two training sessions at TAFE NSW Mount Druitt. Participants included people of different ages and experience levels. The session combined regulatory notes and practical work, making the training relevant. Mark explained the ARC's role in administering the ARCtick licence scheme for the Australian Government. He also provided information on:

- licence types
- Code of Practice requirements
- requirements to hold a current RTA and complete a permit condition check.

The sessions also included topics such as retrofitting and refrigerant recovery, helping participants better understand key aspects of their daily work.

Awareness insight: Avoid accidental fire system discharges

There have been increasing incidents around accidental discharges that are triggered while performing RAC work near fire alarms and suppression systems.

While refrigerants themselves vary in flammability, a leak can cause a fire if it contacts live electrical parts. Here are some reminders to help you avoid accidental discharge of refrigerant while performing RAC works.

Breaking into a RAC system – precautions:

- If not in the open, the area must be well ventilated before breaking into the system and recovering the refrigerant or conducting any hot work.
- Systems, or the isolated section of the system, must be evacuated and purged with OFN (Oxygen Free Nitrogen) before any hot work.
- If the system contains any refrigerant, or any other gas under pressure, it must not be broken into by means of cutting or breaking pipework.
- A portable leak detector should be considered when completing cut-in tasks for toxic or flammable fluids.

Hot works alert:

- Where repair work requires brazing or de-brazing or any hot work, all refrigerants must be recovered from the system, or isolated (by means of shut off valves) in a part of the system remote from the repair.
- OFN must then be purged through the system both before and during the brazing process.

Flammable refrigerant reminder:

- Before beginning work on systems with flammable refrigerants, conduct safety checks to reduce the risk of fire.
- Before breaking into the system or conducting any hot work, ensure that the area is in the open air or is well ventilated.
- Any mechanical ventilation used should be suitable for potentially hazardous environment.
- Electrical devices, leads or ignition sources in the vicinity should not be energised unless they are rated for hazardous environments.

Understanding refrigerant recovery 4-part series

Part 1: Refrigerant recovery cylinders

Refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) technicians are required to know how to safely recover refrigerant from old equipment to ensure it is not released into the environment. This series is designed to give you a clear and practical understanding of recovery cylinder types, safe handling and compliance in refrigerant recovery.

Here, in Part 1, we outline the key requirements for holding a Refrigerant Trading Authorisation (RTA) and explain the different types of recovery cylinders, and their role in the recovery process. One of the conditions for holding an RTA is that the holder has and maintains at least one of each of the following pieces of equipment:

- Leak detector
- Vacuum pump
- Recovery unit

Refrigerant recovery is the process of safely removing refrigerant from a system (such as an air conditioner or refrigerator) and storing it in a separate cylinder for reuse, recycling, or disposal. Using the appropriate tools and equipment is vital, as fluorocarbon refrigerants **must not** be released into the atmosphere.

Appropriately licensed ARCtick technicians currently use 2 different types of recovery cylinders, Reclaim and Pump-down cylinders, each used for a specific purpose. These cylinders can either be purchased or rented from suppliers of stationary and automotive refrigeration and air conditioning equipment.

Reclaim cylinders are for returning used and/or contaminated refrigerant for disposal. These cylinders are often not clean. After recovering the refrigerant, it is to be returned to a wholesaler. It is important to record the amount of refrigerant returned in your quarterly reports.

Pump-down cylinders, on the other hand, are guaranteed clean and suitable for temporarily storing refrigerant during servicing, which can then be transferred and reused in a system. This aligns with industry standards and the 2025 Refrigerant Handling Code of Practice.

It is crucial that you only recover flammable refrigerants, such as R32, into a Reclaim or Pump-down cylinder suitably designed and labelled for use with flammable refrigerants with this Class label.

Further information on recovery cylinders can also be found in the **Australian and New Zealand Refrigerant Handling Code of Practice 2025, Parts 1 and 2**, under sections Refrigerant recovery, recycling, reclamation and disposal together with Handling and storage of refrigerants.

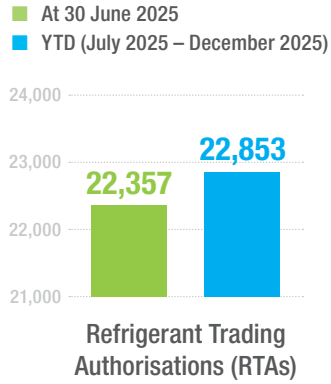
Correct use of recovery cylinders reduces the chance of cross contamination and refrigerant emissions, protecting the environment. In Part 2, we will discuss: 'How much refrigerant can be safely stored in a recovery cylinder?'

BY THE NUMBERS

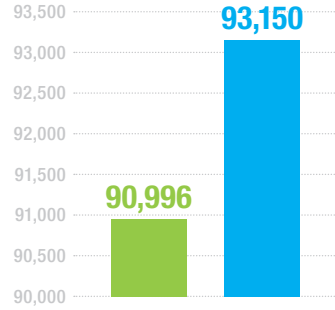
ARC Licence Scheme: 2025-26 Year to Date (YTD) review

Permit Numbers

▲ 496 RTAs
▲ 2,154 RHLs
increase in 2025-26 YTD permit numbers



Refrigerant Trading Authorisations (RTAs)



Refrigerant Handling Licences (RHLs)

Refrigerant Recovery

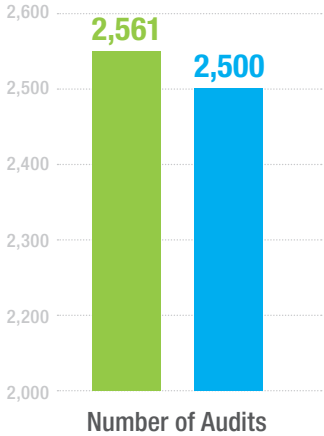
Your recovery efforts created **environmental impact:**
YTD July 2025 - November 2025

Data courtesy of Refrigerant Reclaim Australia

148.88 tonnes
Recovered

0.37 million tonnes
CO_2e prevented from being released into the atmosphere

Field Engagement



5,061
total audits conducted 2025-26 YTD

Summer Campaign

Consumers *LOOK FOR THE TICK*

This year's campaign will continue through to the end of March 2026

82,258+
website visits

7,670+
Licence checks

6,356+
Business searches

October - December 2025

Michael Rex

Michael Rex joined the ARC Queensland team in July 2024, bringing 37 years of experience in the RAC industry.

What drives Michael most is his passion for the job. 'I'm motivated by the people I meet—individuals and businesses who are passionate about what they do and who are committed to leaving an environmental legacy for future generations,' he said.

When asked about what attracted him to the RAC industry, Michael highlighted the variety of skills involved. 'The main appeal of the refrigeration and air conditioning trade, for me, is the diversity of skills it requires. From fault-finding and repairs to complex and unusual installations, the trade draws from many disciplines.'

'I have been fortunate to work with some exceptionally skilled individuals who excelled at tackling challenging jobs and solving problems others avoided. These people asked the right questions, approached tasks logically and patiently, and demonstrated a passion for continual learning and skill development,' he said.

Michael says what motivates him each day is the team he works with at the ARC.

> ***'In my time at ARC, I've become part of a team with decades of industry experience and genuine passion for the field,' he said. 'I feel privileged to work alongside other Field Officers, to continue learning, and to contribute in a meaningful way to environmental outcomes.'***

Ensuring the correct use of OFN or tracer gas during installation

FROM THE FIELD

Extreme care must be taken when using Oxygen Free Nitrogen (OFN) or tracer gas (TG). TG is OFN with another inert gas added to aid leak detection.

Cylinders can reach pressures of up to 14,000 Kilopascals (kPa) at room temperature. Technicians must follow safe handling practices and always wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Only use OFN or TG during the installation of refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) systems and pipework. They are both clean, dry, oxygen free, non-flammable, non-toxic, non-reactive and stable gases.

Use OFN or TG during installation of RAC systems to minimise scaling and minimise moisture in the system. Clean, leak-free systems are essential to ensure effective moisture removal during evacuation and to avoid future system failures.

OFN must be **high purity**, with less than **10 parts per million (ppm) water**. Do not use standard grade nitrogen. It may contain enough oxygen to create a serious safety risk at high pressure. TG is OFN with a small amount of hydrogen (less than 5%) or helium (10-30%) added to improve leak detection.

The use of OFN or TG must follow the Australian and New Zealand Refrigerant Handling Code of Practice 2025. **Part 2 of the Code states,** that during brazing, OFN must be purged through the system continuously at minimal gauge pressure to remove the possibility of oxidation, scaling, pin hole leaks from soldering, and reduce the risk of blockages, oil contamination and compressor failure.

Inside ARC's inaugural webinar

The ARC held its inaugural automotive sector webinar on 27 November 2025, with participation from the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW).

The webinar was led by ARC's General Manager of Technical and Training, Taha Taouti, with support from Tracy Gurnett, Director of the Air Quality Emissions Standards Section, and expert panellists Brett Meads, President at VASA, and the ARC's Technical and Training Manager, Noel Munkman.

More than 100 automotive technicians and industry members joined the webinar. Taha's introductory presentation was titled 'Refrigerants in Automotive Air Conditioning'. Taha explained Australia's international commitments, the Montreal Protocol and the HFC phase down. He also spoke about:

- the latest changes in refrigerant management
- industry trends
- key challenges
- what the future may look like for the automotive sector.

A key takeaway from the discussion was how industry can prepare for upcoming regulatory, operational and sustainability challenges.
To watch the webinar recording, **click here**.

The air we share: Why licensed technicians are essential to Australia's national refrigerant stewardship

Article courtesy of **Refrigerant Reclaim Australia**

Perched on a windswept cliff at the northwestern tip of Tasmania, the *Kennaook*/Cape Grim Baseline Air Pollution Station quietly records the composition of the Southern Hemisphere's atmosphere.

Over time, its measurements have allowed the long-term rise in greenhouse gases since the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century to be modelled and revealed, with carbon dioxide up 50%, methane up more than 170% and nitrous oxide up 25%, reflecting emissions from every sector, including those involving refrigerants.

The data captured and recorded in the Air Archives from *Kennaook*/Cape Grim make one message unmistakable – *Every ARCtick permit holder plays a measurable role in achieving Australia's environmental goals to protect the planet.*

From atmospheric science to daily practice

Since 1976, scientists at *Kennaook*/Cape Grim have preserved air samples, enabling detailed tracking of atmospheric change. Each flask tells its own story in Australia's progress in controlling ozone-depleting and high global warming potential gases. The atmospheric data collected, analysed and used in global climate reporting reinforces the close connection between Australia's refrigerant stewardship system and the scientific evidence that shapes national environmental policy.

What the data shows and why it matters for refrigerant handling licence holders

Atmospheric records clearly demonstrate the decline in CFCs such as R-12 since the Montreal Protocol, a direct result of the phase-down of these gases and of safe handling practices implemented over time. But they also show that today's HFCs and emerging refrigerants continue to contribute to global warming if mishandled. With Australia's HFC phase down tightening from 2026, refrigerant stewardship and end of life refrigerant management is crucial.

This means that safe, consistent recovery and destruction is crucial to prevent avoidable emissions. The return of unwanted refrigerant for destruction, and the roles of the RHL and RTA, are more critical than ever.

The air above and the work below

While the scientists work to measure the air above, the technicians work in the field to contribute to keep it clean. The environmental principle for each technician and business remains the same: *every molecule recovered and returned to RRA for safe destruction will never appear in an atmospheric sample taken at Kennaook/Cape Grim.*

Every step, from obtaining a Refrigerant Handling Licence to the recovery and safe destruction of unwanted refrigerant gas, reinforces Australia's standing as a leader in refrigerant stewardship. The shared commitment of licensed technicians and the industry remains central to the environmental outcomes we collectively achieve.

Why compliance protects Australia's future

The ARCtick scheme, along with the safe recovery and disposal of unwanted and surplus refrigerants, is essential in Australia's efforts to minimise emissions. The collaboration between CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology, with contributions from Refrigerant Reclaim Australia and the Australian Refrigeration Council, bridges the gap between science and industry, deepening understanding of how refrigerant gases contribute to Australia's emissions profile.

The future of our atmosphere is shaped molecule by molecule, job by job, and the commitment of licensed technicians remains central to safeguarding the air we all share.

What's on

UPCOMING EVENTS!

16-17 March 2026

AIRAH HVAC Innovation Conference | Sydney

Discover the latest breakthroughs in energy-efficient systems, smart HVAC controls, and sustainable solutions while rubbing shoulders with the brightest minds in the field. Details at **https://hvacinnovation.airah.org.au/**.

5-7 May 2026

ARBS 2026 | Melbourne

Join the ultimate industry event, where the entire sector converges to connect, collaborate and shape the future. Discover more than 350 exhibitors showcasing the latest in HVAC&R and building services innovation. Meet ARC representatives at the ARC stand number 786. Details at **https://www.arbs.com.au/arbs2026/**.

14-16 May 2026

AAA Expo 2026 | Melbourne

Visit Australia's largest Auto Aftermarket event, where technicians, business owners, suppliers and parts manufacturers have one place to see the latest tech, network and learn. Meet ARC representatives at the ARC stand C22. Details at **https://aftermarketexpo.com.au/**.