

# New Refrigerant Rules and What They Mean

By Staci Gatica For *The NEWS*

**O**n Jan. 1, 2010, two important federal rules took effect. Their main purpose is to further sharply restrict the use of substances that allegedly harm the earth's protective ozone layer and contribute to climate change. The restrictions are required both by an international treaty and federal law.

The targeted chemicals are HCFCs primarily used as refrigerants, specifically R-22, -142b, -123, -124, -225ca, and -225cb. These chemicals, if leaked into the atmosphere, deplete the stratospheric ozone layer and are being phased out under the Montreal Protocol. According to scientists, by cutting the production and import of these chemicals and limiting how they can be used, the rules will help the ozone layer heal faster.

While many people in the industry have heard about upcoming changes, they and others still may have specific questions about how the rules will affect their businesses. Here are answers to some expected questions, provided by



## ozone aspect

**D**epletion of the ozone layer results in more UV radiation reaching the Earth's surface. Overexposure to UV radiation can lead to serious health effects, such as skin cancer, cataracts, and immune suppression. While the ozone layer is under repair, it is even more essential to practice sun-safe behavior, follow the action steps in EPA's SunWise program, and check the UV Index to better plan outdoor activities. Children are most susceptible to the health impacts of UV radiation.

With more than 1 million people diagnosed with skin cancer in the United States each year, teaching children to be safe in the sun is an important step toward decreasing the incidence of this preventable disease. Since sun damage is cumulative and protection is best if started early, EPA's SunWise Program works to improve children's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior.

To learn more about sun safety, visit [www.epa.gov/sunwise](http://www.epa.gov/sunwise). To learn more about ozone depletion, go to [www.epa.gov/Ozone/strathome.html](http://www.epa.gov/Ozone/strathome.html). ■