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Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)

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Fact Sheet

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control • www.scdhec.gov

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)

What are chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)?

Developed in the 1930's, CFCs are blends of chlorine, fluorine and carbon. CFCs have been used as metal cleaners, degreasers and as a coolant in refrigerators, freezers, industrial chillers and motor vehicle air conditioners. Freon® is a CFC.

Why are CFCs harmful to the ozone layer?

When released into the air, CFCs drift up to a layer of gas 12-30 miles above the earth's surface. This gas is called the stratospheric ozone layer, and it protects us from harmful ultraviolet radiation. Once CFCs reach the ozone layer, they break apart and release chlorine. Each chlorine atom can destroy 100,000 ozone molecules.

What is being done to protect the ozone layer?

The 1990 Clean Air Act (CAA) banned the release of CFCs during the repair, maintenance and disposal of cooling equipment. The CAA also ruled that all products made with or containing CFCs must be labeled. By January of 1996, the U.S. had stopped making most kinds of CFCs.

What can I do to help protect the ozone layer?

Get your car or truck serviced at a shop that uses CFC recycling equipment and have all leaks repaired. Recycling and leak repair help conserve CFCs and limit the release of chemicals into the air.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggests three steps to help businesses meet the CFC requirements of the Clean Air Act:

- Appoint one employee to be the refrigerant manager. This should be someone who is familiar with the facility's HVAC/R operations, industry standards and CFC laws;
- Make a complete list of all equipment and refrigerants; and
- Develop a refrigerant management plan.

For more information, visit: www.epa.gov/compliance/complaints/index.html

For more information on federal CFC requirements or to file a complaint, please visit:

<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/complaints/index.html>

US EPA

Stratospheric Ozone Protection Division

Mail Code 62055

401 M Street SW

Washington, DC 20460

Stratospheric Ozone Protection Hotline: (800) 296-1996

Stratospheric Ozone Protection Website: www.epa.gov/compliance/complaints/index.html

DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality, Innovations Section provides information on environmental topics.

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DHEC's Bureau of Air Quality, Innovations Section, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.

