



Unitary Products Residential Product Update and Technical Services **Service Letter**

Letter: **M-429-2016 and YS-014-16**

Date: May 10, 2016

To: Unitary Products Factory Branch Service, Sales, Warranty, and Training Managers
Unitary Products Distribution Service, Sales, Warranty, and Training Managers

Subject: **U.S. EPA Publishes Warning on Use of R-22a Refrigerant in Residential Air Conditioning Systems in Unapproved Applications**

Product: Residential Air Conditioners and Heat Pumps

Summary: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is cautioning homeowners, HVAC contractors, and service technicians of the safety hazards related to recharging existing home air conditioning systems with unapproved propane-based refrigerant.

As reported in the Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration News on May, 5, 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is cautioning homeowners, HVAC contractors, and service technicians of the safety hazards related to recharging existing home air conditioning systems with a propane-based refrigerant. We agree with and support the contents of this warning, and encourage our distribution partners to communicate this information throughout the channel to highlight potential safety risks for our contractors and homeowners. **Use of unapproved R-22a or other propane-based refrigerants in these products is considered to be “unauthorized alteration” and excludes any altered products from warranty coverage.**

The following information is an excerpt from the ACHR News article published on their website at <http://www.achrnews.com/articles/132399-epa-warns-again-about-risks-of-using-r-a-refrigerant>

Using a propane-based refrigerant in an air conditioner that is not designed to use propane or flammable refrigerants poses a threat to homeowners as well as service technicians, because systems that are recharged with an unapproved alternative called “22a” can catch fire or explode, resulting in injury and property damage. EPA said it continues to investigate instances where propane-based refrigerants have been illegally marketed and used as substitutes for HCFC-22 (R-22) and will continue to take enforcement actions where appropriate.

“Using an unapproved, flammable refrigerant in a system that wasn’t designed to address flammability can lead to serious consequences, including explosion or injury in the worst cases,” said Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for EPA’s Office of Air and Radiation. “As the summer cooling season gets started, we want to make sure consumers and equipment owners know what is going into their system is safe.”

A number of refrigerants with “22a” or “R-22a” in the name contain highly flammable hydrocarbons, such as propane, and are being marketed to consumers and contractors seeking to recharge existing home and motor vehicle air conditioning systems that were not designed to use propane or other flammable

refrigerants. As a result, EPA recently proposed that 22a and other highly flammable refrigerants are unacceptable for use in existing central air conditioning systems because they pose significantly more risk to public health or the environment than acceptable substitutes. Under the authority of the Clean Air Act, EPA's Significant New Alternatives Policy (SNAP) Program evaluates chemicals and technologies on an ongoing basis within a comparative risk framework.

EPA encourages HVAC technicians and contractors to consult its website for more information and recommends homeowners confirm that air conditioning service providers follow manufacturers' recommendations. Recharging a cooling system with the wrong refrigerant can void manufacturers' warranties.

For additional information from the EPA about R-22a and acceptable refrigerants for air conditioning applications, visit www.epa.gov/snap/questions-and-answers-about-r-22a-safety.

For additional information on the most recent EPA SNAP rules, visit www.epa.gov/snap/snap-regulations.

Thank you to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for their diligence on this topic and for publishing this warning. We also thank the Air-Conditioning, Heating and Refrigeration News for this article and their coverage of this important topic. The message here is clear - we must inform and encourage our distribution partners to communicate this information throughout the channel to highlight potential safety risks for our contractors and homeowners.

Reference Information:

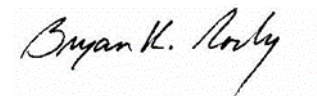
R-22 Refrigerant
Approved for use in selected
Residential AC/HP Equipment
and Applications



R-22a Refrigerant
Not approved for use in any
Residential AC/HP Equipment
or Applications



Please let us know if you have any questions or comments on this matter.



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