



COOLCHANGE

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Coming soon: New Automotive Air Conditioning Code of Practice

A major update to the Australian Automotive Air Conditioning Code of Practice (the Code) is expected to be released soon. The Code is the main rulebook for the automotive air conditioning industry. If you hold an ARCTick automotive licence, you must follow these rules as part of your licence conditions.

What is changing?

The current Code has been used since 2008. The new version is currently being updated to keep up with changes in the industry. It will cover the entire life of a system—from how it is made and installed, to how it is serviced and eventually disposed of.

Key improvements will include:

- **Safety guidance:** The new Code will contain important health and safety guidance that was not in the old version.
- **Refrigerant classes covered:** Instead of just listing refrigerant names, the Code will now use safety classes (like A1, A2L, A2, and A3). This will help the Code stay useful as old refrigerants are phased out and new, safer options enter the market.
- **Real-world practices:** For example, R1234yf is not regulated under the *Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Act 1989*. However, it is classed as A2L (mildly flammable). Since R1234yf is now common in workshops, including it in the Code will give technicians much clearer guidance.

ARC CEO Mark Lamb says, "The new Code will give practical advice for safer work and better refrigerant handling. For ARCTick licence holders, following the Code is a mandatory requirement that helps protect workers, businesses, and the environment."



Noel
Munkman
at Wire &
Gas 2026
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Next steps

The legal instrument is currently being updated to match the new Code. Once this is officially finished, the ARC will notify all permit holders.

When it is published, you can find the new Code online at
[arctick.org/refrigerant-handling-licence/codes-of-practice/](https://www.arctick.org/refrigerant-handling-licence/codes-of-practice/)

You can also sign up to receive a hard copy through VASA at
<https://vasa.org.au/cophardcopy/>

Licensed technicians: The critical link in emissions-free recycling

End-of-life refrigeration and air conditioning equipment can still contain harmful refrigerant gases.

If released, these gases can damage the ozone layer or contribute to climate change. ARCTick licensed technicians play an important role in recovering refrigerants when a system is decommissioned or uninstalled. The National EPA is working with the waste, recycling and demolition sectors to improve refrigerant recovery from old equipment.

All scheduled refrigerants must be recovered before a system is scrapped. This includes HFC refrigerants and older ozone-depleting gases, such as R-22.

To encourage this, the National EPA is engaging with industry stakeholders at events about compliance and recovery issues. Officers have also visited scrap metal recycling businesses to help operators understand what they need to do.

Residual gas in aging equipment remains a key risk factor during the recycling process. Gas leaks can happen due to:

- poor removal
- illegal dumping
- metal scavenging.



Some of these gases are flammable and can create safety risks. Many recyclers ask for proof that the gas has been removed before they accept old equipment.

In some areas, it can be hard to find a licensed technician. The National EPA is educating recyclers on how to find licensed businesses through the **Look for the Tick** website. The team is also communicating how licensed technicians can train recycling workers to apply for a restricted refrigerant recovery licence.

The National EPA is also recommending that councils include refrigerant recovery requirements in demolition forms and recycler contracts. Recovering refrigerants also makes financial sense. As fewer HFCs are imported, these gases will become harder to get and more valuable.

How your incident reporting drives regulatory action

Last year the Australian Refrigeration Council (ARC) received a record **231 reports** of suspected non-compliance from industry members, government agencies and the public.

This increase shows that more people are aware of the rules that protect the refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) industry and are taking action when they see something that may be wrong.

What happened after reports were received

- **231** reports of suspected non-compliance received
- **100%** reports were assessed within 4 days
- **103** closed/non-applicable incidents
- **119** engagement and education activities completed by ARC staff
- **9** reports escalated to the National EPA for serious regulatory action

Why reporting matters

These reports provide the intelligence we need to keep the RAC industry fair and safe. By reporting concerns, you help us move beyond just “policing” to provide targeted education and early intervention. Our goal is to address risks before they become major environmental or safety issues.

Easier incident reporting

We recently updated our online reporting form to make it easier to report concerns such as:

- unlicensed work
- unauthorised possession of refrigerant
- unlawful refrigerant emissions
- other suspected breaches of permit scheme requirements.

Providing clear information helps the ARC review reports more quickly and take appropriate action.

To report a suspected breach, you can use this form (arctick.org/information/incident-report) to notify the ARC.



Avoid delays: New fact sheets to help with permit applications

Applying for a Refrigerant Handling Licence (RHL) or a Refrigerant Trading Authorisation (RTA) should be a straightforward process.

However, small errors in an application can often lead to frustrating delays, duplicate payments or issues with refunds. To help get it right the first time, the ARC has released 2 new fact sheets based directly on permit holder feedback at recent industry events. The guides are designed to answer the most common questions and tips to navigating the application process smoothly.

New resources available now

- **Fact Sheet #27:** Applying for a full licence with overseas qualifications
- **Fact Sheet #28:** Common application mistakes to avoid



View all fact sheets here or visit www.arctick.org/information/fact-sheets/





ARC connects with the automotive industry at Wire & Gas 2026

From 31 July to 2 August, the ARC attended **Wire & Gas 2026** in Brisbane, providing an opportunity to engage with people across the automotive industry.

ARC's engagement highlights

The ARC hosted an information stand where technicians and business owners could speak with the team about permit conditions, emerging refrigerants and ongoing initiatives. Attendees also received a range of resources, including:

- fact sheets
- vehicle stickers
- the R-1234yf educational booklet and wall chart.

A key session on the new Australian Automotive Air Conditioning Code of Practice was presented by the National EPA. The session covered the main updates in the upcoming Code, including new safety guidance and advice on regulated and A2L refrigerants.

The ARC also joined an expert panel in the training program. The ARC's Technical and Training Manager, Noel Munkman, joined Kylie Farrelley from Refrigerant Reclaim Australia and Greg Picker, Refrigerants Australia Executive Director and former ARC Chair. The panel discussed the HFC phase-down and its implications for refrigerant management.

Further, ARC CEO Mark Lamb, presented the ARCTick Environment Award (Mobile Sector) to R-LEK Auto Electrical & Air-Conditioning in Roma, Queensland. It recognises an RTA holder who demonstrates strong refrigerant management, compliance and record keeping. The nominations for this award were done by ARC field engagement officers.



ARC staff at Wire & Gas 2026.

ARC officers visit RRA's Plascon destruction plant

The ARC field engagement officers visited Refrigerant Reclaim Australia's (RRA) Plascon destruction plant in Melbourne, along with the ARC's CEO and other staff members.



The visit gave the team a close look at the technology used to safely destroy recovered refrigerants. The visit was part of 3-day field officers' workshop in August 2026. The tour helped participants see the refrigerant recovery and destruction process first-hand. RRA's General Manager, Kylie Farrelley, also explained the role of the program, trends of recovery and how technicians play an important role in the recovery process.

How harmful gases are safely destroyed

The Plascon plant uses an argon plasma arc furnace to destroy harmful refrigerants. The furnace uses pyrolysis to break the gases down in a safe and controlled way. Refrigerants are fed into a chamber heated to about 10,000 °C. At that heat, the gas breaks down into simple molecules. These by-products are then treated and disposed of safely, preventing them from harming the environment. The Plascon site must meet strict environmental standards. It destroys at least 99.99% of the refrigerant it receives. This gives industry and the public confidence that harmful gases are being handled safely from recovery through to destruction.

Higher penalties for non-compliance from 1 July 2026

The ARC reminds all refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) technicians and businesses that penalties for non-compliance have increased.

From 1 July 2026, the Commonwealth penalty unit increased from **\$330 to \$364** under section 4AA of the *Crimes Act 1914*. As a result, fines for offences linked to penalty units have also increased. Penalties apply to unlicensed RAC work, unauthorised trading, false representations and breaches of permit conditions. Fines for these offences range from \$21,840 for individuals to \$109,200 for corporations. Higher penalties apply to the unlawful discharges of high global warming potential (GWP) refrigerants. These offences can attract fines of up to \$145,600 for individuals and \$728,000 for corporations.

To avoid these penalties, the ARC encourages all ARCTick permit holders to maintain compliance by:

- ensuring your licence is valid
- checking that your licence covers the work you are carrying out
- keeping accurate records to meet compliance requirements.



Working with an expired licence or carrying out work outside the scope of a licence can result in significant penalties.

For more information, the ARC has published **Fact Sheet 11: Penalties under the Act and the Regulations**. View the fact sheet at www.arctick.org/information/fact-sheets/

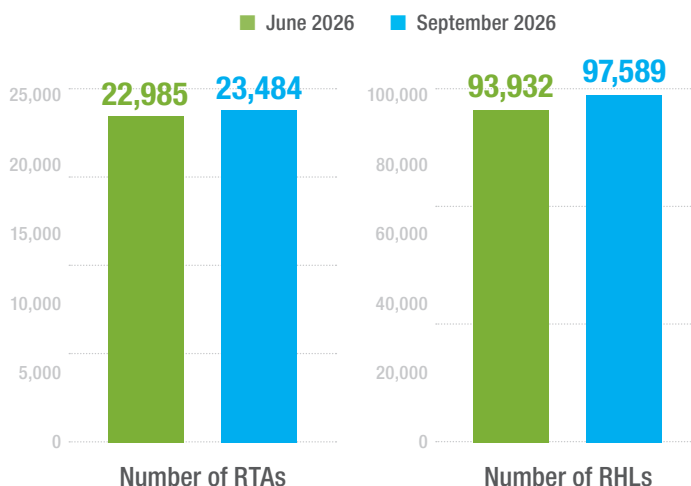
BY THE NUMBERS

ARC Licence Scheme: Quarterly review

Permit Numbers

▲ 499 RTAs
▲ 3,657 RHLs

increase in permit numbers for Q1, 2026–27, period ending September 2026.

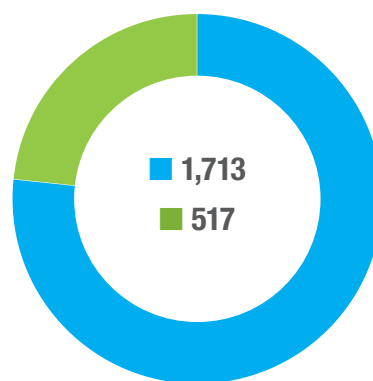


Permit Condition Checks

2,230

RTA permit condition checks completed in Q1, 2026–27, period ending September 2026.

■ Existing permit holders
■ New permit holders

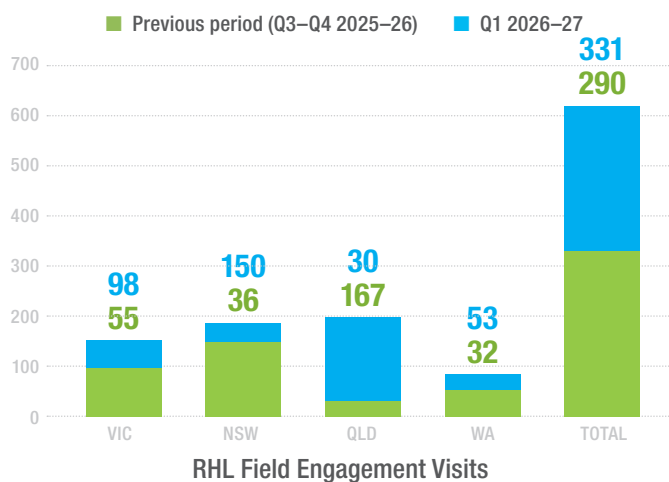


RTA Permit Conditions Checks

RHL Field Engagement Program

621

RHL field engagement visits completed as at period ending September 2026.



RHL Field Engagement Visits

A call to the industry: Be part of the future of RAC training

Article courtesy: Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Training Alliance (RACTA)



RACTA has identified shortage of refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) teachers across Australia as a significant challenge for the future sustainability of our industry.

With the shortage of qualified trainers, there may be fewer apprenticeship places available at registered training organisations (RTOs). This can lower training quality and affect the future workforce.

With many RAC teachers close to retirement, RTOs in several states are finding it hard to find qualified trainers. As a result, some jobs stay vacant for a long time.

The industry is undergoing rapid change driven by the move to lower GWP refrigerants and technological advancements. This makes the role of educators more important than ever.

“Teaching can be a good second career for experienced technicians. It lets them share their skills and support the next generation. It can also offer steadier work and less physical strain than working in the field,” said Noel Munkman, Manager Technical and Training, ARC.

“The HVAC&R sector is changing fast. To build a skilled workforce, the industry needs not only new technicians, but also enough qualified people to train them.”

Governments and training providers across Australia are helping people make this move. In some states and territories, individuals can get subsidised training and flexible pathways to become teachers.

Pass on your trade skills to the next generation. You can take the first step by:

- talking to your local TAFE or RTO about teaching jobs
- asking about part-time, sessional, or trial teaching roles
- finding out what support is available to complete your Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40122).

Check with your local provider or state training authority for current incentives. For information on [training centres](https://www.arctick.org.au/education/training-centres/) near you, visit [arctick.org.au/education/training-centres/](https://www.arctick.org.au/education/training-centres/)

From the field: Make record keeping work for you

FROM
THE
FIELD

Recent permit condition checks have highlighted that inconsistent record-keeping remains a common challenge.

Permit holders report that for many businesses, the hardest part of the job isn't the technical work—it's the paperwork. Most of your time is spent on-site, and keeping up with compliance can feel like a burden.

However, accurate record-keeping is more than just a regulatory requirement; it is a tool to ensure businesses run smoothly. The ARC supports RTA's maintaining the records necessary to stay compliant.

Why it matters

- **Equipment longevity:** Regular maintenance records ensure your tools perform when you need them most. For example, tracking oil changes for your vacuum pumps ensures they operate correctly and helps you deliver high-quality results to your customers.
- **Permit condition check readiness:** Maintaining clear records of refrigerant use, cylinder maintenance and RHL holder details ensures you are always prepared for permit condition checks.

We've made it easy

To take the stress out of the process, the ARC provides easy-to-use templates for your business reporting. These templates are designed to help you capture all necessary information quickly and accurately.

Get your free templates

Download your free reporting templates www.arctick.org/refrigerant-trading-authorisation/business-reporting-templates-and-guides/ or contact compliance@arctick.org for further support.



DID YOU KNOW?

57%

of non-compliance findings in 2025–26
were related to incomplete record-keeping.

Don't let paperwork hold your business
back—use our free templates.

Understanding refrigerant recovery

Part 3 of 4: Are your recovery cylinders to standard?



As the number of high-pressure refrigerants in the market grows, it is crucial for technicians to ensure each piece of their equipment, including recovery cylinders, meets the appropriate safety standards.

Using out of date, untested or unsafe cylinders is a breach of Refrigerant Trading Authorisation (RTA) conditions under the Ozone Protection and Synthetic Greenhouse Gas Management Regulations 1995. Cylinders must meet Australian Standards **AS 2030.1-2009** and **AS 2030.5-2009**, which outline the requirements for the verification, inspection, and maintenance of cylinders.

Here are some key rules from the standards

- 1. Cylinders can't be refilled without the owner's permission and confirmation of previous contents.** This is to ensure it is only filled with an appropriate refrigerant type, flammability and toxicity class and purity.
- 2. The cylinder and valve must suit the type of refrigerant.** For low pressure refrigerants, their minimum pressure rating is 5.2MPa, but for high pressure refrigerants, the required pressure rating is at least 6.0 MPa. Flammable refrigerants must be stored in cylinders rated and labelled for flammable refrigerant.
- 3. The intended filling pressure must not exceed the cylinder's test pressure.** The designed maximum safe working pressure of a refrigerant cylinder is determined in accordance with AS 2030.5 and must not be exceeded in any filling operation, no matter how temporary. If this occurs, the cylinder's pressure relief will open, releasing refrigerant into the atmosphere.
- 4. Safety devices and valves must be free of corrosion or damage.** Corrosion or damage to pressure relief devices and valves can result in them not operating correctly when required.
- 5. Cylinders must not show signs of irregular treatment, mechanical and/or fire damage, or contamination beyond allowed limits.** Damage to the cylinder can weaken it and reduce the pressure it can safely handle.
- 6. Cylinders must carry a current test date stamp mark and be retested and stamped by a certified test station every 10 years.** This ensures the cylinder and valves are not damaged and can still safely meet its pressure rating.
- 7. The safety classification of the refrigerant matches the label on cylinder (flammable or non-flammable).** Flammable refrigerant must be stored in cylinders rated and labelled for flammable refrigerant. Flammable refrigerant cylinder valves have a left-handed thread outlet.

For more details, see **ARC Fact Sheet No. 2: Are you taking care of your gas cylinders?**

Ensuring your cylinders are to standard is not just about safety; it also protects you and the environment. Therefore, only use approved equipment by checking the pressure rating and ensure the cylinder complies with Australian Standards.

In Part 4, we will answer: 'When must cylinders be retested?'



What's on: upcoming events

26 November 2026

AIRAH National Awards Melbourne

The AIRAH Awards recognise Australia's HVAC&R building services industry. Join AIRAH in celebrating excellence and achievement across the sector! Details at awards.airah.org.au/

25-26 November 2026

InstallerSHOW 2026 Melbourne

InstallerSHOW Melbourne is a HVAC&R focused trade show, hosted at MCEC in Melbourne. Get hands-on with the latest products, ask technical questions from the experts, and network with their industry peers. Meet the ARC team at **stand Z23**. Details at: www.installershowmelbourne.com/

17 March 2027

AIRAH Refrigeration Conference (RefCon) Melbourne

RefCon is Australia's leading event dedicated to the refrigeration sector, bringing together local and international experts, practitioners, researchers, policymakers and industry stakeholders. Join in to explore the latest innovations, trends and challenges shaping the future of refrigeration. Details at: refcon.airah.org.au/