

16 INFORMATION SERVICING

1) Checks to the area

Prior to beginning work on systems containing flammable refrigerants, safety checks are necessary to ensure that the risk of ignition is minimised. For repair to the refrigerating system, the following precautions shall be complied with prior to conducting work on the system.

2) Work procedure

Works shall be undertaken under a controlled procedure so as to minimise the risk of a flammable gas or vapour being present while the work is being performed.

3) General work area

All maintenance staff and others working in the local area shall be instructed on the nature of work being carried out. Work in confined spaces shall be avoided. The area around the work space shall be sectioned off. Ensure that the conditions within the area have been made safe by control of flammable material.

4) Checking for presence of refrigerant

The area shall be checked with an appropriate refrigerant detector prior to and during work, to ensure the technician is aware of potentially flammable atmospheres. Ensure that the leak detection equipment being used is suitable for use with flammable refrigerants, i.e. no sparking, adequately sealed or intrinsically safe.

5) Presence of fire extinguisher

If any hot work is to be conducted on the refrigeration equipment or any associated parts, appropriate fire extinguishing equipment shall be available to hand. Have a dry power or CO₂ fire extinguisher adjacent to the charging area.

6) No ignition sources

No person carrying out work in relation to a refrigeration system which involves exposing any pipe work that contains or has contained flammable refrigerant shall use any sources of ignition in such a manner that it may lead to the risk of fire or explosion. All possible ignition sources, including cigarette smoking, should be kept sufficiently far away from the site of installation, repairing, removing and disposal, during which flammable refrigerant can possibly be released to the surrounding space. Prior to work taking place, the area around the equipment is to be surveyed to make sure that there are no flammable hazards or ignition risks. NO SMOKING signs shall be displayed.

7) Ventilated area

Ensure that the area is in the open or that it is adequately ventilated before breaking into the system or conducting any hot work. A degree of ventilation shall continue during the period that the work is carried out. The ventilation should safely disperse any released refrigerant and preferably expel it externally into the atmosphere.

8) Checks to the refrigeration equipment

Where electrical components are being changed, they shall be fit for the purpose and to the correct specification. At all times the manufacturer's maintenance and service guidelines shall be followed. If in doubt consult the manufacturer's technical department for assistance. The following checks shall be applied to installations using flammable refrigerants.

- The charge size is in accordance with the room size within which the refrigerant containing parts are installed.
- The ventilation machinery and outlets are operating adequately and are not obstructed.
- If an indirect refrigerating circuit is being used, the secondary circuits shall be checked for the presence of refrigerant; marking to the equipment continues to be visible and legible.
- Marking and signs that are illegible shall be corrected.
- Refrigeration pipe or components are installed in a position where they are unlikely to be exposed to any substance which may corrode refrigerant containing components, unless the components are constructed of materials which are inherently resistant to being corroded or are suitably protected against being so corroded.

9) Checks to electrical devices

Repair and maintenance to electrical components shall include initial safety checks and component inspection procedures. If a fault exists that could compromise safety, then no electrical supply shall be connected to the circuit until it is satisfactorily dealt with. If the fault cannot be corrected immediately but it is necessary to continue operation, and adequate temporary solution shall be used. This shall be reported to the owner of the equipment so all parties are advised.

Initial safety checks shall include:

- That capacitors are discharged: this shall be done in a safe manner to avoid possibility of sparking.
- That there are no live electrical components and wiring are exposed while charging, recovering or purging the system.
- That there is continuity of earth bonding.