

newsline

TRANE DEALER CELEBRATES 150TH ANNIVERSARY ■ CANADIAN HYDRONICS MARKETING LAUNCHED

EPA Aggressively Auditing Refrigerant Record Keeping

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) appears to be aggressively auditing the refrigerant record keeping of HVACR contractors in the South.

The *NEWS* has been receiving reports of the effort in Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi, although it is unclear as to how many contractors are being audited.

One distributor from that region did say that he has received "numerous calls" in recent weeks from contractors who have been visited by the EPA. Another distributor from that region said contractor customers have told him they are being audited by the EPA and need to produce records of their refrigerant recovery/reclaim activities.

There were also indications that some distributors have also been visited and counter sales people were asked about the supply house reclaim program.

When contacted by *The NEWS*, the EPA would only say that it "cannot discuss ongoing cases, but continues to perform inspections, respond to tips, and take enforcement action as resources allow."

The recent record keeping audits by the EPA are the most significant actions by the federal agency within the HVACR industry since 2004 when the EPA moved against the Dominick's supermarket chain for illegal venting of

HCFC-22. That resulted in an \$85,000 fine and the shuttering of three stores and major overhaul of three others.

But the most recent actions are focused on contractors rather than an end user and deal with record keeping rather than venting.

It is unclear if the EPA will eventually issue a formal statement regarding the ongoing audits as it did with the Dominick's case. The fine and resolution in the supermarket sector led to the EPA and the Food Marketing Institute proactively launching the GreenChill initiative, which encourages environmental and efficiency improvements within stores and accords recognition for those efforts.

Like the issue of venting, the record keeping falls under Section 608 of the Clean Air Act.

According to a portion of record keeping requirements:

"Technicians servicing appliances that contain 50 or more pounds of refrigerant must provide the owner with an invoice that indicates the amount of refrigerant added to the appliance. Technicians must also keep a copy of their proof of certification at their place of business.

"Owners or operators of appliances that contain 50 or more pounds of refrigerant must keep servicing records documenting the date and type of service, as well as the quantity of refrigerant added."

1 1TH ISSUE OF THE

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