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One in every five supermarkets still using refrigerant R 22 and damaging the climate Federal grants for quick phase-out

The Federal Environment Agency is urging quick replacement of the refrigerant R 22 with climate-friendly alternatives. Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are still being used as coolants at butchers', in canteen kitchens, air conditioning systems, or in supermarkets. Although it damages the ozone layer if it leaks, one in every five supermarkets in Germany still uses R 22. The European Union has banned the production of R 22 after 1 January 2010, but it foresees a transition period until 2015 which will allow users to continue to use recycled R 22. Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Federal Environment Agency, however, is advising consumers to refrain from using R 22 as of now, saying, "Users should make a quick switch to more climate-friendly refrigerants such as carbon dioxide in their cooling systems. As a reward there are funds available from the Federal government's climate protection programme."

There is yet another incentive for making a switch: due to the ban on production, UBA expects shortages in supplies of R 22 needed to refill old systems well before 2015. About 1,000 tonnes of HCFCs are needed annually to refill refrigerant which has leaked from cooling systems. Experts at the Federal Environment Agency believe that after the ban on production goes into effect on 1 January 2010, only about 10-15 percent of the demand for R 22 can be met. For anyone who fails to convert there will be nothing left.

The following should be observed when phasing out R 22: since cooling units have a service life of 10 years or more, it is usually not the optimal solution to switch to new refrigerants. Instead, installation of a new modern and optimised system is recommended, for as a rule, it is more energy-efficient and economic in the long run. Whenever possible R 22 should be replaced with natural halogen-free refrigerants such as carbon dioxide (R 744).

The Federal Ministry for Environment's climate protection impulse programme provides funding of up to 25 percent of net investment costs for commercial units. If additional climate protection measures, e.g. use of waste heat, are implemented, the costs can be subsidised by up to another 35% of net investment costs. Grants for new installations are only available on the condition that they incorporate innovative, energy-saving technology and use natural refrigerants.

For more information go to: <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/produkte/fckw/index.htm>,
<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info->

[medien/mysql_medien.php?anfrage=Kennnummer&Suchwort=3829](http://www.bmu.de/medien/mysql_medien.php?anfrage=Kennnummer&Suchwort=3829) and
http://www.bmu.de/klimaschutzinitiative/nationale_klimaschutzinitiative/impulsprogramm_kaelteanlagen/doc/41744.php.

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