TDLR
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING & REGULATION

TEXAS DEPA[illegible] LICENSING[illegible]TION

I'm having air conditioning or heating issues

Anyone who offers to provide air conditioning and refrigeration (ACR) contracting services or who works as an ACR technician must be licensed in Texas. An ACR Technician must work under the general supervision of a licensed ACR Contractor.

It's important to hire a licensed contractor because:

- they have had training and passed examinations covering rules, regulations, building codes,
- they must complete continuing education on new systems and equipment types,
- they have undergone criminal background checks, and
- they have liability insurance to cover any damages or injuries that might happen.

You should always get more than one bid before deciding who to hire. Don't pay for a job in full before the job is completed.

What questions should I ask when I'm hiring an air conditioning contractor?

- Are you licensed and are your technicians registered or certified?
- Do you have general liability insurance? Can you provide an insurance certificate?
- What's the address of your physical office? Be sure to check whether it's legitimate.
- Do you have references I can contact? Be sure to talk with them.
- What size system will I need? A total system replacement will require a new certified heat load calculation and system selection.
  Hint: Bigger isn't necessarily better. Too much air conditioning power can increase the relative humidity in the home or office and cause mold to develop.
- How energy efficient is the new system? It may be worth it to buy a more expensive system if it's more efficient than the cheaper system.
- Can you use my current ductwork? If not, why not?
- Are all the work details listed along with where the equipment is going to be installed? Does it include start and completion dates, contractor's insurance policy, and license number(s)?

When a contractor is bidding to do work for me, what should they do?

- They should inspect your HVAC system before beginning repairs.
- They should perform a heatload study.
- They should do a duct work study.
- They should specify the makes and models of the equipment, including model numbers, names, quantity, manufacturer warranties, documentation, and energy ratings.
- They should provide bids or estimates in writing.
- They should leave all the owner's manuals, documentation of installation procedures, AHRI certificate, and any records of measurements and testing.

See following page for information on the phase out of R410a coolant and the new government mandated refrigerants.

AIR CONDITIONING REPAIR CONSUMER PROTECTION

For more information, please contact the TDLR Office of Strategic Communication: media.inquiries@tdlr.texas.gov.

My 10-year-old air conditioner has a leak and has lost the R410a coolant. Do I really need a new unit?

Recent global agreements to reduce global warming has phased out the production and consumption of refrigerants including R410a, which is commonly used in air conditioners in the United States.

Starting 1 January 2025, NEW air conditioning equipment cannot be manufactured utilizing R410a, so the air conditioning industry has switched to new refrigerants with a lower global warming potential.

Of course, existing equipment still has the need for the old refrigerant (R410a), and it is still available, but the federal government will be incrementally cutting the yearly allowed production of new R410a. The curtailment of production will cause the price to rise every year. The industry and consumers are not required to stop using existing R410a air conditioners or replace existing equipment. However homeowners and businesses should consider these changes when repairing or maintaining existing 410a systems.

New A2L refrigerants. like R32 and R454B will replace R410a. These refrigerants have a lower global warming potentials, aligning with international efforts to combat climate change.

(A word about repairs that require adding refrigerant to a system: Refrigerant is not consumed during the air conditioning process, and it does not evaporate. The only reason for adding refrigerant to a properly charged system would be the presence of an improperly brazed (soldered) piping joint or a crack or split in a coil, etc. Leaks should be found and repaired!)

A very important point in this discussion is that the replacement refrigerants cannot be added to an existing systerm. The equipment must be replaced with new equipment manufactured to utilize the new refrigerants.

If substantial repairs are needed, replacement rather than repairs may be the most economical option, given a fairly short payback. A 10-year-old or older system utilizing R410a as the refrigerant will most likely be much less efficient than a new system, and repairs will be more costly.