

EPA Reaches Agreement with Ritchie Engineering

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CHICAGO (SEPT. 27, 2001) -- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 has reached an agreement with Ritchie Engineering Co. Inc. on alleged violations of federal clean air regulations at the company's plant, 1120 Fuller Drive, Garrett, Ind. A \$20,000 penalty was assessed.

The agreement resolves an administrative complaint filed in September 2000 alleging Ritchie made and distributed its model R60 refrigerant recovery unit without proper labeling. The company also failed to comply with an EPA administrative order issued Jan. 13, 2000, telling it to comply with labeling requirements.

The improper labeling and selling of refrigerant recovery equipment was discovered during a May 10, 2000, inspection conducted by the Indiana Department of Environmental Health, requested by EPA.

Chlorofluorocarbon refrigerants deplete the stratospheric ("good") ozone layer, allowing dangerous amounts of cancer causing ultraviolet rays from the sun to strike the Earth's surface. Production of some of these chemicals was stopped in 1995, and federal law strictly controls their use and handling.

"EPA's mission is to protect public health and the environment," said Bharat Mathur, director of the regional Air and Radiation Division. "We will take whatever steps are needed to ensure compliance with the Clean Air Act."

Information on compliance with the refrigerant recycling rule can be found at www.epa.gov/ozone under the heading "Product Labeling."

About EPA

Founded in 1970, EPA is responsible for protecting the environment and human health. The Agency enforces air, water, and land laws and ensures that designated health standards are met. EPA Region 5 includes six Great Lakes states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.