

Halocarbons

Halocarbons in Canada



Halocarbons are chemical compounds (such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and halons) that, when released into the atmosphere, contribute to global warming. Some halocarbons are ozone-depleting substances that destroy the stratospheric ozone layer, hindering the Earth's ability to protect itself

from damaging ultraviolet rays.

Canadian federal and provincial regulations aim to progressively eliminate halocarbons (CFCs, HCFCs, HFCs and halons). These regulations also regulate the control of halocarbon releases and disposal, as well as the use of qualified labour to manage them.

Halocarbons at Bell and use implications

Halocarbons are used as refrigerants in Bell's air conditioning/cooling systems and as fire suppressants in our fire extinguishing systems. At Bell, halons were phased out by mid-2010. Halon fire extinguisher systems were mainly replaced by Early Smoke Detector systems or less environmental harmful agents. CFCs were phased out at Bell in early 2007 and were replaced by HCFCs and HFCs, which are less harmful to the environment.

HCFCs, however, were only developed to serve as transition cooling agents. They are now targeted internationally, and their elimination is progressively planned in Canada.

Specifically, the production of HCFC-22, intended to serve as a refrigerant, was banned in Canada in 2020. All Bell business units that own and operate air conditioning and cooling systems are currently reviewing their HCFC *usage* phase-out plans in order to account for this ban in *production*.

Furthermore, under the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol (2016), HFCs are now also targeted for eventual elimination. All of Bell's business units that own and operate air conditioning and cooling systems are currently reviewing their phase-out plans in order to also consider HFCs.

Our halocarbon program has clear and consistent objectives

Protect the ozone layer

Minimize the use of halocarbons

Maintain systems using halocarbons in compliance with applicable regulations

Decommission equipment using HCFCs as soon as possible, in accordance with government regulators' expectations.

Bell's long-standing commitment to managing halocarbons has resulted in many advances over the last decade, including the following:

- Helping develop an air conditioning system that uses compressed CO₂ as a refrigerant rather than HCFCs
- Creating guidelines for the decommissioning of air conditioning/cooling systems
- Developing phase-out plans aligned with government and industry recommendations for equipment using HCFCs and HFCs in all business units
- Implementing a reporting process in the event of a halocarbon leak

Even with the preventive and routine maintenance we conduct on our equipment, releases of halocarbons are inevitable due to mechanical defects and breakdowns. In 2020, our number of halocarbon leaks increased by 9.8% compared to 2019. Total leaks from air conditioning and fire extinguishing systems represented 6,559 kg of halocarbons, which is a 36% increase from the volume leaked in 2019. This represents just 2% of the 246 tons of halocarbons we use across the country.

To further reduce leaks and control any future impact, we perform root-cause analyses of incidents and equipment life cycles.

	TREND	2020	2019
Total weight in use (tons)	↓	246	324
Number of leaks	↑	335	305
Amount leaked (kg)	↑	6,559	4,816
Proportion of total weight leaked	↑	2%	1%

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Did you know?

Bell uses approximately 240 tons of refrigerant in over 13,900 air conditioning systems and chillers across the country

These systems average 15 years of service

Of these, approximately 75% still use HCFC-22 as refrigerant

Bell also uses approximately 77 tons of FM-200 (a heat-removing agent) in over 600 fire-extinguishing systems