

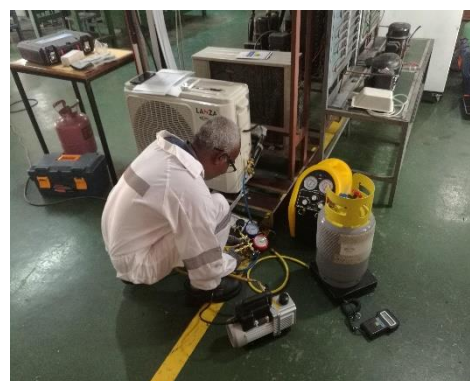
## Maldives and Sri Lanka upgrade RAC skills through the Refrigerant Driving License (RDL) Program



In late November and mid-December 2019, both the Maldives and Sri Lanka, in cooperation with UNEP OzonAction and the Air-Conditioning, Heating and Refrigerating Institute (AHRI), advanced the Refrigerant Driving License (RDL) program by conducting technicians training sessions under the pilot stage of the RDL program targeting 31 local technicians who were trained and tested against RDL minimum requirements of competencies and skills. The pilot stage of RDL started in June 2019 in six countries: Grenada, Maldives, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago where the Train-the-Trainers' sessions successfully certified 20 local Master Trainers in the six (6) countries. These Master Trainers will conduct additional training sessions for local technicians during the pilot stage with supervision from the RDL Secretariat i.e. UNEP OzonAction and AHRI.

Maldives and Sri Lanka became the first two countries worldwide to train and test local field technicians in accordance to the RDL program. The two sessions were successfully organized at the Polytechnique Institute of Maldives between 26-28 November, and at the Sri Lanka-Korea National Vocational Training Institute between 16-18 December. Both sites are well-equipped and highly regarded at the market level. They are also affiliated with the local vocational training authorities.

The RDL program arises from the need for a responsible and safe transition to next generation refrigerants. The RDL is a refrigerant management qualification program jointly developed by AHRI and UNEP OzonAction and supported by key international industry associations. The RDL sets minimum competencies and skills for the HVAC&R (Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning and refrigeration) servicing network (individuals and companies) and creates an internationally recognised program through industry and governments. The program will be an important tool for technician training, education, and benchmarking of essential competencies and skills required for the proper and safe handling of refrigerants. This in turn will support the completion of the phase-out of HCFCs and enable a smooth start to the beginning of the HFC phase-down in Article 5 countries, as stipulated by the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.



Left side; Participants to the RDL session in Maldives (26-28 Nov).  
Right side; local technicians during the practical test of RDL

The RDL initiative was launched as a concept by UNEP and AHRI at the 37<sup>th</sup> OEWG meeting in July 2015. Since then, AHRI and UNEP have promoted the RDL amongst key HVAC&R associations while holding meetings in the margins of relevant industry events. Subsequently, an RDL Advisory Committee was established consisting of key industry associations that support the RDL including ABRAVA, ACAIRE, AREA, AREMA, EPEE, JRAIA, the Alliance for Responsible Atmospheric Policy, and ASHRAE.



Left side: Participants to the training session in Sri Lanka (16-18 Dec 2019)



Right side: Local technicians in Sri Lanka practicing recovery skill before taking the RDL exam

Between 2016 and 2018, AHRI and UNEP worked in consultation with the RDL Advisory Committee, to review and analyse the existing globally recognised certification programs, to explore the qualification categories and agree on the operational modality of the RDL. After thorough analysis and in-depth consultation, the RDL Advisory Committee adopted four categories for the start-up of RDL (as per the table below) with a specific definition for each category. Currently, only the category of “**RDL for Small Applications\***” is being piloted. Once completed, other categories will be developed and examined as well.



Competency Requirements	(A)	(B)	(C)
	Small Applications	Commercial Refrigeration	Commercial Air-Conditioning
Basic Knowledge (Environment, Refrigerants classifications/types, applications and relevant policies)	X	X	X
Handling, transportation, storage and management of refrigerants' containers	X	X	X
Servicing skills of leak detection, R&R, evacuation, charging and system tightness	X	X	X
Logging and Record Keeping		X	X
Tools and equipment for the job	X	X	X

\*The definition of the “**RDL Category (A) Small Applications**”, which is being piloted, is: Air conditioners and heat pumps with less than a 20kW/65kBtu/h cooling capacity and, Refrigeration equipment with less than a 6kW/20kBtu/h cooling capacity. (Examples: Packaged AC, ductless mini-split AC, multi-capacity AC, heat pumps, refrigerators, dehumidifiers, display cases, coolers and other unitary and hybrid equipment)

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