



When the Regulatory Push Comes to Shove

It's been more than two years since the Department of Energy (DOE) announced its final rule on energy conservation standards for commercial refrigeration equipment. At the time of its 2014 announcement, many industry stakeholders expressed their objections to this standard, claiming that it was founded on insufficient premises and nearly impossible to meet.

The industry's most substantial objection resulted in a formal petition submitted to federal court—one that consolidated the opinions of the American Heating and Refrigeration Institute, some of its member companies and the North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers. In August, the Appeals Court ruled in the DOE's favor, effectively quashing any hopes that the ruling would be amended or delayed. Any lingering questions about the implementation of the DOE's new efficiency standard have been laid to rest.

Now, the compliance deadline is just six months away. All stand-alone commercial refrigeration equipment released after March 27, 2017, will need to achieve up to 30–50 percent reduction in energy consumption. Some OEMs have already cleared this hurdle. But, if you are an OEM who thought this deadline wouldn't come to pass and have delayed research, design, development and testing of new products, you are no doubt feeling a new sense of urgency. The regulatory push has come to shove.

That's why the "Countdown to Compliance" feature story in this issue is devoted to addressing this imminent deadline — not only what it means to OEMs, but also evaluating its larger impacts on the industry. In our Helix Highlight article, we're also introducing a new simulation model for ice machines that can help OEMs with rapid prototyping and allow them to virtually test the efficiency impacts of system design and component changes.

It's important to remember that the March 2017 compliance date is just the first in a series of regulatory milestones in the journey that lies ahead. We know there will soon be changes in acceptable refrigerants, and we're well aware of the subsequent energy minimums to be enforced on other classes of commercial refrigeration equipment. The next several years will be full of challenges. Each regulation will need to be approached with specific technologies and strategies to achieve compliance.

Our commitment to helping our partners prepare for each step along the path to compliance is stronger than ever. To Emerson, it's about more than seeking fresh approaches to system designs; it's about helping the industry confidently embrace a new era of refrigeration. Regardless of where your company may be on its journey toward compliance, we have the resources and the willingness to help.

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