



1920 EAST SLIGH AVE. TAMPA, FL33610
PHONE: (813) 870-22607 · FAX: (813) 234-6720

BULLETIN #O8-1

Equipment Mismatching has been Clarified by the Florida Building Commission

In January the Florida Building Commission (FBC) issued a declaratory statement, putting on record, what most HVAC contractors already knew. Mixing different manufacturers and equipment does not meet the intent of Florida's Energy Code.

A formal request for interpretation was sought on a situation where an outdoor unit was being replaced with a manufacturer different from the remaining indoor unit. Would this be a mismatch or would it be allowed by the code?

The declaratory statement (DCA07-Dec-172) ruled that these circumstances constitute a replacement, not a repair. "Section 13-607.1ABC.3.1.1, Florida Building Code requires verification of equipment efficiency to demonstrate compliance with U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) certification requirements. Outdoor and indoor units that are not designed to be operated together must still meet DOE standard. If the system does not meet the standard, it is considered to be mismatched and does not meet code."

This section of the Energy Code does identify conditions which would be used to allow the mixing of manufacturer's equipment. In lieu of an ARI certification, the contractor could obtain a rating from a recognized independent laboratory or a Florida registered engineer. From an expense standpoint these avenues may not be cost effective unless it is a large project.

The problem faced by our industry is that we will not be able to do business on "change-outs" as we have in the past. Most older split systems are going to require a complete equipment replacement in order to meet the intent of the Energy Code and this is going to dramatically increase the price to consumers. This was one of the reasons that ARI and a number of equipment manufacturers fought against a national 13 SEER rating a couple of years ago.

State and national standards for energy are ultimately painting our industry into a corner. In two years contractors will have to begin changing both pieces of equipment (anyway) as it relates to R-22, because only R410A equipment will be manufactured.

RACCA recognizes that our contractor members face a difficult task in explaining these new change-out requirements to consumers who might otherwise hire a contractor who will not pull a permit or hire an unlicensed individual..

The facts are:

~ According to an independent study by Alabama Power mismatching 10 SEER air handlers with 13 SEER condensing units (especially heat pumps) will not provide energy savings and may well cost the consumer more than the original system.

~ Moreover, the equipment capacity could be reduced by 30% to 40%, and TXV's are not an answer.

RACCA members can download this study from our website at www.racca-florida.org Click on Consumer at the top of the home page. RACCA is producing a flyer that is consumer oriented and we will distribute this informational flyer to our members in a couple of weeks. The flyer together with the Alabama Power study should give our members some ammunition when proposing equipment replacements.

Not all code jurisdictions are of this DEC statement, but it won't be long. Prepare yourselves.

02-08

www.racca-florida.org