Beware of the perfect storm brewing in the air conditioning sector, says 
Andrews Sykes

Facilities management partners of commercial air conditioning users (offices and warehouses to shopping centres and airports) need to be aware of the perfect storm brewing in the industry, according to specialist hire company Andrews Sykes.

(PRWEB UK) 28 May 2013 -- Facilities management partners of commercial air conditioning users (offices and warehouses to shopping centres and airports) need to be aware of the perfect storm brewing in the industry, according to specialist hire company Andrews Sykes. The company is warning that significant underinvestment in maintenance over recent years, combined with introduction of a new British Standard and the looming R22 deadline, mean the sector could experience a capacity crunch over the next eighteen months, and few businesses will have contingency plans in place.

Whilst malfunctioning or broken air conditioning units simply create an uncomfortable indoor environment and reduce productivity, non-compliance with the British Standard 15780 (introduced in 2011) and the R22 issue both have more serious potential consequences: failure to comply could be argued as negligence and have legal as well as financial ramifications.

Steve Reeve, Director at Andrews Sykes said: “Many organisations will not realise that it is the end user or landlord who is the liable party in terms of responsibility for plant and equipment – not the contractor, the facilities manager, or other supplier. Depending on the specific details of the lease, the end user or landlord has a legal duty to ensure all air conditioning equipment is free from refrigerants such as R22, and that cleanliness and dust accumulation is kept within acceptable levels.”

Andrews Sykes advises any organisation that uses or manages air conditioning should take steps to ensure compliance now.

BS 15780 compliance:

Review the standard required for ductwork cleaning on newly installed and refurbished ductwork - depending on a room or building’s use. Three classes of cleanliness can be applied. It is also a recommendation that the workplace be reviewed annually.

Consider hiring a specialist cleaning contractor to undertake a deep clean of ductwork.

Create a maintenance and cleaning schedule to ensure that work is only undertaken at time of lowest demands, when the units are more likely to be offline.

R22 compliance:

Read the leasing contract – does it mention air con?

Ask for documentation to show whether the R22 refrigerant has been replaced

If not, ask the landlord who is responsible for updating air con
Assess how many units the property has and speak to a reputable air con company about the budget required for refrigerant replacement.

Consider hiring temporary air conditioning units. Most organisations are heavily reliant on having a cool, comfortable environment for productivity, so this reduces disruption significantly - few hard pressed organisations can afford to risk business continuity.

Reeve continued:

“The collective impact of underinvestment, BS 15780 and R22 means many businesses may struggle to meet their obligations in providing a supply of clean, fresh air at a reasonable temperature to their employees and customers. We anticipate the air conditioning system in some organisations will be out of use unexpectedly, due to lack of maintenance, and at the peak of Summer. This may be the tipping point as clients seek out decent, reliable contractors who, while ‘the bonnet is up’ can cover off R22 replacement, and deep cleaning to BS15780 compliance. Any organisation that relies on climate control equipment should implement a plan sooner rather than later, to include the hire of some form of temporary solution, to ensure there’s no disruption when the inevitable happens.”

For more information about Andrews Sykes visit [http://www.andrews-sykes.com](http://www.andrews-sykes.com)

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Notes to editors

Andrews Sykes is the UK’s largest specialist hire company with operations in Europe and the Middle East. With over 30 depots and hire centres in the UK alone and 500 dedicated employees worldwide, the company has over 40 year’s experience in the hire, sale, installation and maintenance of all types of comfort cooling, air conditioning, heating, temperature control and ventilation systems. It serves virtually all industry sectors from small businesses to multi-site operations and international corporations across building and construction companies, industry, retail, banking and finance, leisure and hospitality, facilities management, manufacturing, utilities, oil and chemicals, government, healthcare, the armed forces and emergency services.
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