

Guidance Type: Certification and CCMS; Conservation Standards

Category: Consumer Products

Product: Central air conditioners

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Q: If you have a model of outdoor unit for a single-split-system AC with single or two-stage compressor whose coil-only rating under M1 does not meet regional standards but certain blower coil combinations do, can that outdoor unit continue to be installed in the Southeast (“SE”) or Southwest (“SW”) region?

A: No. – In order to be installed in the SE¹ or SW² region, the outdoor unit must have at least one coil-only combination that is compliant with the regional standard applicable at the time of installation.

Beginning January 1, 2023, basic models that do not meet the amended base national standard (SEER2) that becomes effective on that date may no longer be manufactured. Units of basic models manufactured prior to January 1, 2023, that were certified as compliant with the previous national standards (SEER) can still be installed in the United States, other than in the SE or SW regions, until the inventory is depleted. 10 CFR 430.32(c)(5). Beginning January 1, 2023, basic models that meet the base national standard (SEER2) but do not meet the amended regional standards (SEER 2, EER2) may still be manufactured, but may no longer be installed in the SE or SW region. 10 CFR 430.32(c)(6). Beginning January 1, 2023, only basic models that meet the amended regional standards (SEER2, EER2), as applicable, may be installed in the SE or SW region. 10 CFR 430.32(c)(6).

In general, a basic model may be certified as compliant with a regional standard (and, as of January 1, 2023, meets the applicable amended regional standard) only if all individual combinations within that basic model meet the regional standard for which it is certified. All individual model combinations within a basic model must include, for single-split-system AC with single-stage or two-stage compressor (including space-constrained and SDHV systems), a coil-only combination representative of the least-efficient combination in which the specific outdoor unit is distributed in commerce. See 10 CFR 429.16(a)(1); 429.16(a)(4)(i); 430.32(c)(6)(ii).

A manufacturer may sell an outdoor unit of identical design in the SE and SW regions, if the manufacturer separates the basic model (i.e., outdoor unit model) into different basic models with unique model numbers for distribution in each region, provided that the basic model certified for the SE and SW regions: (1) does not include any individual combinations that are not compliant with the regional standard applicable at the time of installation; and (2) includes at least one coil-only combination that is representative of the least-efficient combination in which the specific outdoor unit is distributed in commerce. *Id.*

DOE notes that the install-through provision in 10 CFR 429.102(c)(4)(i) allows existing stock of discontinued basic model combinations to be installed in the SE or SW regions as long as they were

¹ SE includes the States of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories. 10 CFR 430.42(c)(6)(i).

² SW includes the States of Arizona, California, Nevada, and New Mexico. *Id.*

previously validly certified as compliant to the regional standards applicable at the time of installation. DOE further notes that the term “previously validly certified” means that all combinations within the basic model must have previously shown compliance with the regional standard applicable at the time of installation, including, for single-split-system AC with single-stage or two-stage compressor (including space-constrained and SDHV systems), a coil-only combination representative of the least-efficient combination in which the specific outdoor unit is distributed in commerce, in order for the install-through provision to apply.

Any basic model that does not meet the amended regional standards (SEER2, EER2) must be: (1) installed in the SE or SW region prior to January 1, 2023; (2) moved to the part of the nation outside the SE or SW region for installation; and/or (3) recertified in accordance with DOE’s regulations, including having at least one coil-only combination that complies with the regional standards for single-split system AC with single-stage and two-stage compressors.

DOE provides two examples to illustrate these points.

Example 1: Model A outdoor unit with coil-only (“C/O”) indoor unit A is certified with a 13.4 SEER2. Model A outdoor unit with C/O indoor unit B is certified with a 14.3 SEER2 and an 11.7 EER2. Beginning January 1, 2023, per 430.32(c)(6) and 429.102(c)(4) and 429.158(a), model A cannot be certified compliant with regional standards or installed in the SE or SW because all individual combinations of the outdoor unit model do not comply with the regional standards. Specifically, the certification of Model A with C/O indoor unit A is below the minimum-required 14.3 SEER2 for split-system air conditioners applicable on or after January 1, 2023. Model A can be installed only outside of the SE and SW regions.

Alternatively, the manufacturer can split Model A into Model A1 (with C/O indoor unit A) and Model A2 (with C/O indoor unit B) in accordance with 429.16(a)(4)(i). Model A1 can be installed only in regions other than the SE or SW because all its combinations do not comply with the regional standard. Model A2 can be separately certified as a new basic model and installed in the SE and SW provided that all individual combinations show compliance with the regional standards. This is allowed because both Model A1 and Model A2 have a C/O combination rating, which complies with 429.16(a)(1) and 429.16(b)(2)(i).

Example 2: Model B outdoor unit with C/O indoor unit A is certified with a 13.4 SEER2. Model B outdoor unit with blower coil (“B/C”) indoor unit A is certified with a 14.3 SEER2 and an 11.7 EER2. (These are the highest rated combinations available in the basic model.) Beginning January 1, 2023, per 430.32(c)(6) and 429.102(c)(4) and 429.158(a), Model B cannot be certified compliant with regional standards or installed in the SE or SW because all individual combinations of the outdoor unit model do not comply with the regional standards. Specifically, the certification of Model B with C/O indoor unit A is below the minimum-required 14.3 SEER2 for split-system air conditioners applicable on or after January 1, 2023. Model B can be installed only outside of the SE and SW regions.

In this case, Model B cannot alternatively be split into Model B1 (with C/O indoor unit A) and Model B2 (with B/C indoor unit A) because Model B2 would not have a C/O combination rating compliant with regional standards and thus would not comply with 429.16(a)(1) and 429.16(b)(2)(i). Model B with B/C indoor unit A may not be installed in the SE and SW regions.