



U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL
1730 M Street, N.W., Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20036-4505

The Special Counsel

June 16, 2026

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: OSC File No. DI-24-000271

Dear Mr. President:

I am forwarding to you the report transmitted to the Office of Special Counsel (OSC) by the Department of the Army (Army) in response to the Special Counsel's referral of disclosures of wrongdoing at the U.S. Army Tank-Automotive and Armament Command, Red River Army Depot (RRAD), Texarkana, Texas. OSC has reviewed the disclosure, agency report, and whistleblower comments, and, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e), I have determined that the report contains the information required by statute and the findings appear reasonable.¹ The following is a summary of those findings and comments.

The whistleblower, [REDACTED], who consented to the release of his name, is a Heavy Mobile Equipment Inspector at RRAD. [REDACTED] alleged that employees violated Sections 608 and 609 of the Clean Air Act by: releasing the air conditioning refrigerant hydrochlorofluorocarbon-134a (HFC-134a) into the environment when working on motor vehicle air conditioners (MVACs); not properly maintaining the equipment used to evacuate HFC-134a from MVACs; failing to train and certify employees working on MVACs; and not keeping records about the MVAC recovery equipment or employee training and certification as required by the Clean Air Act and its regulations. The agency substantiated the allegations and implemented several corrective actions.

In 2023 and 2024, RRAD was upgrading the MVACs of approximately 935 Army ambulances in Building 345, on line 18². RRAD was responsible for supervising all necessary personnel, providing equipment, inspecting the upgrade work, and ensuring it complied with applicable regulations. Specifically, the upgrade included removing roughly 10 pounds of HFC-

¹ OSC referred the allegations to then-Army Secretary Christine E. Wormuth for investigation pursuant to 5 U.S.C § 1213(c) and (d), who delegated authority to review and sign the agency report to Assistant Secretary of the Army Installations, Energy and Environment W. Jordan Gillis. A TACOM Environmental Protection Specialist with the G-4 Office of Logistics, Engineering, and Environmental Office investigated the allegations.

² Building 345 had multiple lines (i.e., areas) for refrigerant removal. The military ambulance upgrade was performed on line 18.

134a from the existing systems, removing the MVAC equipment, installing new equipment, and adding three pounds of new refrigerant.

HFC-134a is a flammable, pressurized gas that can cause explosion, frostbite, or oxygen displacement with improper handling.³ To properly remove HFC-134a, it is vacuumed from each MVAC system and pumped into a 30-pound recovery tank until the tank is approximately 80% full. The 30-pound tank is continuously weighed to avoid overfilling and is emptied into a 100-pound recovery tank when it reaches 80% capacity. The smaller tank is then reused to recover more refrigerant. The investigation determined that this process was not followed.

The investigation found that two government contractors—neither of whom received training or certification on the evacuation process or the recovery equipment used—intentionally released HFC-134a into the air during the MVAC upgrade. The investigation also found that RRAD had not maintained the equipment used to evacuate the refrigerant. The report concluded that while RRAD air conditioning refrigerant equipment is calibrated on an annual basis, a Robinair vacuum pump had been operating without proper certification and a 100-pound refrigerant recovery tank's hydrostatic testing expired in August 2023 and needed re-testing. The report also stated that there were no on-site scales to weigh the recovery tanks, which are critical to prevent overfilling. The investigation further discovered that employees working on the MVAC upgrade lacked training and certification on the Robinair vacuum pump and the refrigerant recycling equipment. The report noted that while the government contractors were eligible for RRAD-provided training courses, neither of them had taken any of those courses. According to the report, the above findings showed that RRAD did not adhere to established refrigerant handling safety protocols and regulatory requirements.

As a result, RRAD stopped all motor vehicle refrigerant operations until a number of corrective actions were implemented including: establishing a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that fully described how to properly remove refrigerant; ensuring all personnel performing refrigerant operations were trained and certified in an approved course, trained on the above SOP and on the specific evacuation equipment used; installing and using on-site scales; updating the RRAD *2020 Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) Management Plan* and training installation staff on their respective responsibilities; and developing a system to track refrigerant removals and additions by line rather than by building in order to quickly and easily identify any discrepancies in the refrigerant handling process. Finally, the report confirmed RRAD is no longer violating the Clean Air Act.

In his comments, ██████████ concurred with the investigative findings, praised the corrections taken, and expressed his belief that the changes will increase efficiency, lower costs, increase safety, and provide RRAD's customers with the best equipment possible.

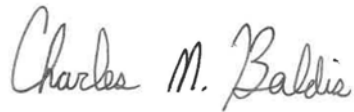
³ R-134a, SDS No. [Online]; National Refrigerants, Inc.: Bridgeton, NJ, Jan. 04, 2021. <https://refrigerants.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/SDS-R134a.pdf> (accessed June 15, 2026).

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I thank the whistleblower for bringing these important issues to OSC. The disclosures led to significant operational improvements that promote general safety and compliance with federal law governing the release of HFC-134a. In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e) I have determined that the reports contain the information required by statute and the findings appear reasonable.

As required by 5 U.S.C. § 1213(e)(3), I have sent copies of this letter, the agency report, and whistleblower comments to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Committees on the Armed Services. OSC has also placed redacted copies of these documents and the redacted referral letter in our public file, which is available at www.osc.gov. This matter is now closed.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charles M. Baldis".

Charles N. Baldis
Chief Counsel

Enclosures