

This first report on "Our Changing Atmosphere" addresses options for controlling the man-made chemicals that are both depleting the Earth's protective ozone layer and contributing to global warming. Society must phase out the use of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), halons and related chlorinated solvents, and ensure that they are replaced by the least harmful substitutes possible. There also is a need to ensure that these ozone depleting/global warming substances are recovered, recycled and ultimately destroyed. It has been suggested that if all the CFCs now in use were to be released, the ozone layer would likely be destroyed. The impact on the Earth's life forms could be devastating.

The need to recover these substances from existing uses in refrigeration equipment has given rise to the term "vampire unit", referring to the equipment used in recovering CFCs and halons in a gaseous state. The analogy is simple but effective. A vampire unit connects to the compressor system in a refrigerator, for example, sucking out the life-blood of the system—the CFCs. At this point, however, the analogy ends, since the vampire unit is protecting life on our planet.

There are three main thrusts to the Committee's recommendations: an accelerated phaseout in the production of CFCs and related ozone depleting substances, beyond that prescribed in the Montreal Protocol; the development of a domestic recovery and recycling system and the call to action of the international community to act decisively in combatting ozone depletion and to assist developing countries to prosper without replicating the harm the industrialized world has done to the Earth's atmosphere. By following our recommendations, we believe that the Government of Canada can set an example for other countries to follow and enhance its credibility as a leader in environmental protection.