

Commercial HVAC Compliance Checklist — Birmingham Commercial Buildings

A facility-manager reference for Alabama commercial HVAC compliance in 2026.

1. Overview

Commercial HVAC in Birmingham, Alabama operates under a layered compliance framework: the International Mechanical Code (IMC) adopted at the state level, ASHRAE standards referenced in the IMC for ventilation and energy efficiency, EPA Clean Air Act Section 608 for refrigerant handling, the EPA American Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Act for HFC phase-down, and Alabama HVAC contractor licensure through the Alabama Board of Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Contractors. This checklist summarizes the baseline compliance scope for commercial buildings in the Birmingham metro.

2. ASHRAE 62.1 Ventilation Rates

ASHRAE Standard 62.1 Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality specifies minimum outdoor-air ventilation rates by occupancy class. Common Birmingham commercial occupancies:

Occupancy	Per-person CFM	Per-sq-ft CFM
Office space	5	0.06
Restaurant dining	7.5	0.18
Retail sales floor	7.5	0.12
Fitness center	20	0.06
Conference room	5	0.06
Multifamily residential	5	0.06

Source: ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2022, Table 6-1.

3. ASHRAE 90.1 Energy Efficiency Baseline

ASHRAE Standard 90.1 sets minimum energy-efficiency requirements for commercial HVAC equipment. Current version in widespread adoption: ASHRAE 90.1-2022. Key equipment minimums:

- Packaged RTU under 65,000 Btu/hr — SEER2 minimums by capacity band
- Larger packaged equipment — IEER minimums
- Chillers — COP minimums for water-cooled and air-cooled
- Gas-fired heating — combustion efficiency minimums

Replacement equipment must meet ASHRAE 90.1 minimums at the time of installation. Birmingham adopts ASHRAE 90.1 through the IECC energy code layer.

4. EPA Section 608 Technician Certification

EPA Section 608 of the Clean Air Act requires technician certification for handling refrigerants. Four categories:

- Type I — small appliances under 5 lb charge
- Type II — high-pressure appliances (commercial splits, RTUs)
- Type III — low-pressure appliances (centrifugal chillers)
- Universal — all three types

Commercial HVAC technicians require Type II plus Type III, or Universal. Verify certification on every technician dispatched to your commercial property.

5. Alabama HVAC Contractor License

The Alabama Board of Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Contractors is the state-level licensing authority. Commercial HVAC work requires a current license at the master classification. Residential-only licenses are not legally authorized for commercial HVAC work in Alabama. Verify license classification through the board's public license verification system before engaging a commercial vendor.

6. Birmingham Mechanical Permit Process

New installations, major equipment replacements, and substantial modifications require mechanical permits through the Birmingham Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits. Typical application requirements:

- Contractor license verification (Alabama state HVAC plus Birmingham business)
- Equipment specifications (manufacturer, model)

- Installation location and configuration drawings
- Refrigerant type and charge documentation
- Gas-line and combustion-air verification for gas equipment
- IMC section compliance statement

7. AIM Act Refrigerant Phase-Down Timeline

The EPA American Innovation and Manufacturing Act caps U.S. HFC production at progressively declining allocations through 2036:

Year	Milestone
2020	AIM Act signed into law
2022	First HFC production allocation
2025 Jan 1	Sector-based restrictions — new commercial HVAC equipment in regulated categories transitions to R-454B, R-32, R-454A, R-448A, R-513A, R-450A (equipment class dependent)
2026- 2029	Continuing allocation reductions; reclaimed refrigerant becomes larger share of service supply
2036	Final allocation target approximately 15% of 2011-2013 baseline

8. Section 608 Leak Repair Thresholds

Systems over 50 lb refrigerant charge:

- Comfort cooling — 20% annual leak-rate threshold
- Commercial/industrial process refrigeration — 30% annual leak-rate threshold
- Repair or retirement plan within 30 days of threshold exceedance
- Recordkeeping for at least 3 years

9. Vendor Due Diligence Checklist

- Alabama HVAC contractor license current at commercial classification
- Birmingham business license registration
- EPA Section 608 certification for every dispatched technician
- Certificate of Insurance at required coverage limits
- W-9 tax form
- OSHA safety training documentation (for industrial facilities)

- A2L refrigerant service training (for new 2025+ equipment installations)
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10. Sources and References

- U.S. EPA — Section 608 regulations — epa.gov/section608
 - U.S. EPA — AIM Act — epa.gov/climate-hfcs-reduction/aim-act
 - ASHRAE — Standards and Guidelines — ashrae.org/technical-resources
 - ICC-Safe — International Mechanical Code — iccsafe.org
 - Alabama Board of HACR Contractors — hvac.alabama.gov
 - Birmingham Department of Planning, Engineering & Permits — birminghamal.gov
 - AHRI — Directory and certification — ahridirectory.org
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Emergency HVAC Repair Pros — Commercial Division

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