

HVAC Contractor Leverages Press Fittings to Increase Efficiency in VRF Installs and Expand Business



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Seattle Contractor Uses Rapid Locking System to Power Through Biggest VRF Project Yet

Jamie Christensen, owner of Seattle-based Elevated Mechanical, LLC, celebrated his second year in business this past winter, marking a successful transition from a 20-year industry veteran to an independent entrepreneur. Christensen's goal in starting his own company is to provide high-quality HVAC services and an unmatched level of customer service.

While operating independently also affords him the flexibility to establish a schedule that prioritizes his family, it also requires Christensen to assume full responsibility of overseeing projects from start to finish to ensure his business's reputation stays strong within the community.

In a recent project at a CNC machine manufacturing shop, Elevated Mechanical was tasked with its biggest commercial variant refrigerant flow (VRF) project yet. The job entailed the installation of a 26-ton Mitsubishi VRF unit,

incorporating two branch boxes — one comprising 12 circuits and the other eight circuits — with a total of 19 heads. The challenge was heightened by the need to work on pipes mounted 20 feet in the air.

Christensen had plenty of VRF experience and knew that brazing the entire project was not an option. The open flame from the torch coupled with the nitrogen purging process would pose too much of a risk in a functioning manufacturing facility where he had to work so close to overhead sprinklers and the facility's employees.

Additionally, the large and heavy brazing equipment would make maneuvering around on a small lift even more difficult, not to mention the time it would take to complete the entire process. Christensen turned to Rapid Locking System (RLS) to get the job done.

Press Fittings Power VRF Success

RLS is a patented press-to-connect fitting specifically developed for the high-pressure application of the HVAC and refrigeration industries. As a flame-free alternative, RLS press fittings are fully registered and listed to UL207 for pressures up to 700 PSI and can create connections up to 60 percent faster than brazing, making them a convenient option to use during install in addition to the traditional brazing method for VRF applications.

"Brazing around an entire fitting while sitting in a lift and holding a torch above your head to make a connection isn't ideal," Christensen explained. "Press fittings simplify the whole process."

RLS fittings are installed with a tool and jaw that handles most of the work, which means connections are consistent between contractors and easily repeatable. Press fittings also result in less rework by virtually eliminating the chance of human error. Christensen reported that he has never received a call-back for projects where he opted for press fittings over brazing.

More than 150 press fittings were used throughout the project to connect overhanging pipes to the new VRF system – a task that would have taken more than double the time, and significantly more supplies and labor had it been brazed. The ease and efficiency

that press fittings offer allowed Christensen to exceed the client's expectations and further Elevated Mechanical's reputation in the Seattle area.

As his company continues to grow, Christensen increasingly relies on his press tool. Press not only offers practical solutions to challenges he faces in the field but has become an integral part of Christensen's business strategy.

"You don't realize how labor-intensive jobs like these are until you're on your own," said Christensen. "RLS has been instrumental in helping me expand my small business."

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