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(54) **Temperature control system with a directly-controlled purge cycle**

Temperaturregelungssystem mit einem direkt gesteuerten Spülzyklus

Système de contrôle de la température doté d'un cycle de purge directement contrôlé

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Description

BACKGROUND

[0001] The present invention relates to temperature control systems. More particularly, the present invention relates to a temperature control system for a transport vehicle.

[0002] Generally, transport vehicles (e.g., straight trucks and tractor-trailer combinations) are used to transport temperature sensitive cargo that is maintained at predetermined conditions using a temperature control system during transportation to preserve the quality of the cargo. The cargo is transported, stored, or otherwise supported within a cargo space of the transport vehicle.

[0003] In some transport units, the temperature control system must be capable of cooling and heating the cargo space to maintain a desired temperature (i.e., a setpoint temperature). A controller switches the temperature control unit between heating and cooling modes based on the relative difference between a sensed temperature and the setpoint temperature to regulate the condition of the cargo space. Typically, the temperature control system is capable of operating a conventional refrigeration cycle utilizing a phase-change refrigerant to cool the cargo space. Refrigerant is compressed by a compressor, condensed, and evaporated in a heat exchanger in thermal communication with the cargo space to cool the cargo space. Heating is typically accomplished by bypassing the condenser and directing hot compressed refrigerant directly to the heat exchanger in thermal communication with the cargo space to heat the cargo space.

[0004] One example of a known transport refrigeration system is disclosed in US 4,912,933 which describes a system having the features of the pre-characterising portion of claim 1.

SUMMARY

[0005] According to the first aspect of the present invention there is provided a temperature control system comprising a compressor configured to compress a heat transfer fluid; a first heat exchanger in fluid communication with the compressor and configured to receive the heat transfer fluid from the compressor and to cool and condense the heat transfer fluid; a second heat exchanger in fluid communication with the first heat exchanger and the compressor and configured to exchange heat with a temperature-controlled space; an accumulator in fluid communication with the second heat exchanger and the compressor and configured to receive a mixture of liquid and vapor heat transfer fluid from the second heat exchanger and direct a vapor portion of the heat transfer fluid to the compressor a valve in fluid communication with the first heat exchanger, the compressor, and the second heat exchange, the valve operable in a first position and a second position, wherein the first position is operable to direct the heat transfer fluid from the com-

pressor to the first heat exchanger and the second position is operable to direct the heat transfer fluid from the compressor to the second heat exchanger without passing through the first heat exchanger; characterised by a liquid level sensor associated with the accumulator and operable to generate a signal indicative of the level of the liquid heat transfer fluid inside the accumulator and a controller in electrical communication with the liquid level sensor and the valve, wherein the controller is adapted to receive the signal and move the valve from the first position to the second position based on the signal.

[0006] According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of operating a temperature control system, the method comprising compressing a heat transfer fluid with a compressor; directing the heat transfer fluid from the compressor to a first heat exchanger with a valve in a first position; cooling and condensing the heat transfer fluid from the compressor in the first heat exchanger; exchanging heat with a temperature-controlled space with a second heat exchanger; receiving a mixture of liquid and vapor heat transfer fluid from the second heat exchanger into an accumulator; directing a vapor portion of the heat transfer fluid in the accumulator to the compressor; characterised by generating with a liquid level sensor associated with the accumulator a signal indicative of the level of the liquid heat transfer fluid inside the accumulator; receiving the signal with a controller, moving the valve with the controller from the first position to a second position based on the signal; and directing the heat transfer fluid from the compressor to the second heat exchanger without passing through the first heat exchanger with the valve in the second position.

[0007] Other aspects of the invention will become apparent by consideration of the detailed description and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] Fig. 1 is a schematic of a temperature control system according to one embodiment of the present invention, illustrating a cooling mode.

[0009] Fig. 2 is a schematic of the temperature control system of Fig. 1, illustrating a condenser evacuation mode.

[0010] Fig. 3 is a schematic of the temperature control system of Fig. 1, illustrating a heating/defrost mode.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0011] Before any embodiments of the invention are explained in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited in its application to the details of construction and the arrangement of components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the following drawings. The invention is capable of other embodiments and of being practiced or of being carried out in various ways.

Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology used herein is for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting. The use of "including," "comprising," or "having" and variations thereof herein is meant to encompass the items listed thereafter and equivalents thereof as well as additional items. Unless specified or limited otherwise, the terms "mounted," "connected," "supported," and "coupled" and variations thereof are used broadly and encompass both direct and indirect mountings, connections, supports, and couplings. Further, "connected" and "coupled" are not restricted to physical or mechanical connections or couplings. Accordingly the scope of the invention is limited by the appended claims.

[0012] Figs. 1-3 illustrate a temperature control system 10 for a transport vehicle. The temperature control system 10 is capable of cooling and heating a cargo space of the transport vehicle to maintain a desired temperature (i.e., a setpoint temperature). The temperature control system 10 includes a controller 12 that switches the temperature control system 10 between heating and cooling modes based on the relative difference between a sensed temperature and the setpoint temperature to regulate the condition of the cargo space. It is to be understood that the refrigeration system 10 may be utilized for other refrigeration applications and is not limited to transport refrigeration applications.

[0013] The temperature control system 10 includes a compressor 14, a first heat exchanger 16, a receiver 18, an expansion valve 20, a second heat exchanger 22 and an accumulator 24 connected in series by fluid conduits. The first heat exchanger 16 is in thermal communication with air outside of the transport vehicle. The second heat exchanger 22 is in thermal communication with air inside the cargo space of the transport vehicle. In other constructions, there may be more than one heat exchanger in thermal communication with air inside the cargo space. A distributor 40 may be employed, as is well known in the art, to distribute refrigerant to a plurality of second heat exchangers (not shown). A first portion 44 of the temperature control system 10, including the second heat exchanger 22, is preferably positioned within the cargo space. A second portion 46 of the temperature control system 10, including the first heat exchanger 16, is preferably positioned outside of the cargo space.

[0014] In the cooling mode, the receiver 18 receives a heat transfer fluid (e.g., refrigerant) from the first heat exchanger 16 and directs refrigerant to the second heat exchanger 22. The expansion valve 20, reduces the pressure of the refrigerant just upstream of the second heat exchanger 22. The accumulator 24 receives a liquid and gaseous mixture of refrigerant from the second heat exchanger and includes a liquid level sensor 32 for detecting a level of liquid in the accumulator 24. Liquid refrigerant accumulates at the bottom of the accumulator 24 and gaseous refrigerant is displaced to the top. The accumulator 24 includes a U-tube 42 (i.e., a U-shaped tube) for drawing gaseous refrigerant from the top of the accu-

mulator 24 into the compressor suction line, as is well known in the art. The liquid level must remain below the inlet of the U-tube 42 in order to prevent the liquid from entering the compressor suction line. The liquid level sensor 32 is positioned at an optimum height within the accumulator tank. The optimum height is chosen such that a liquid level at or below the optimum height is unlikely to result in liquid entering the compressor 14 during movement of the transport vehicle and operation of the temperature control system 10. In other constructions, such as non-transport applications, the optimum height may be closer to the top of the U-tube 42 since movement of the liquid is not expected. Furthermore, the optimum height ensures that an adequate amount of refrigerant is available during a heating/defrost mode of operation, which will be explained in further detail below.

[0015] The liquid level sensor 32 generates a first signal indicative of a refrigerant level below the optimal level and a second signal indicative of a refrigerant level at or above the optimal level. In other embodiments, the sensor 32 may generate an output when the level is below the optimal level (i.e., generate a voltage output value) and not generate any output (i.e., voltage) when the level is at or above the optimal level. In such embodiments, the lack of an output, which can be recognized by the controller 12 as indicative of a liquid level at or above the optimal level, should be considered to be the generation of a signal indicative of the refrigerant level. The liquid level sensor can be a float device, a hydrostatic device, a load cell, a magnetic level gauge, a capacitance transmitter, a magnetostrictive level transmitter, an ultrasonic level transmitter, a laser level transmitter, a radar level transmitter, or the like.

[0016] The temperature control system 10 also includes a suction line heat exchanger 26 and a purge valve 28. The suction line heat exchanger 26 is a shell and tube heat exchanger that transfers heat between the warm liquid refrigerant entering the second heat exchanger 22 and cold vapor refrigerant leaving the second heat exchanger 22. It is to be understood that other types of heat exchangers may be used to accomplish the same results. The purge valve 28 is a solenoid valve in communication with a fluid conduit 34 that fluidly connects the first heat exchanger 16 to the accumulator 24, bypassing the suction line heat exchanger 26, the expansion valve 20 and the second heat exchanger 22.

[0017] A three-way valve 30 is operable in a first position (Figs. 1 and 2) in which refrigerant is directed from the compressor 14 to the first heat exchanger 16 and a second position (Fig. 3) in which refrigerant is directed from the compressor 14 to the second heat exchanger 22. In the first position, a refrigeration or cooling circuit is formed. In the second position, a heating/defrost circuit is formed. The controller 12 controls the position of the three-way valve 30 by opening and closing a pilot solenoid valve 36 in a manner well understood in the art. The three-way valve 30 is kept in the first position by maintaining the pilot solenoid valve 36 closed, which builds

pressure to hold the valve 30 in the first position. When the controller 12 opens the pilot solenoid valve 36, the pressure is released and the three-way valve 30 moves from the first position to the second position. When the controller 12 closes the pilot solenoid valve 36, the pressure builds and the three-way valve 30 moves from the second position to the first position. In other constructions, other types of switching mechanisms may be employed to switch the system between a refrigeration circuit and a heating/defrost circuit.

[0018] The temperature control system 10 is operable in a cooling mode, a condenser evacuation mode, and a heating/defrost mode. The controller 12 communicates with the pilot solenoid valve 36 to place the three-way valve 30 in the first position during the cooling mode and the condenser evacuation mode, and in the second position during the heating/defrost mode.

[0019] During the cooling mode, illustrated in Fig. 1, the three-way valve is in the first position to direct high pressure gas refrigerant from the compressor to the first heat exchanger 16. The high pressure gas refrigerant is condensed in the first heat exchanger 16 to a high pressure liquid refrigerant, which is directed to the receiver 18. The receiver 18 ensures that only liquid refrigerant is directed toward the second heat exchanger 22. Prior to the high pressure liquid refrigerant entering the second heat exchanger 22, the high pressure liquid refrigerant enters the suction line heat exchanger 26 to be pre-cooled by low pressure refrigerant exiting the second heat exchanger 22. Then, the high pressure liquid refrigerant is passed through an expansion valve 20 to lower the pressure of the refrigerant. At least a portion of the refrigerant evaporates in the second heat exchanger 22 to create a mixture of low pressure liquid and low pressure gas. The mixture passes through the second heat exchanger 22 and absorbs heat from air being directed into the cargo space to thereby cool the cargo space. The mixture then passes through the suction line heat exchanger 26 and exchanges heat with the high pressure liquid refrigerant approaching the second heat exchanger 22. Then, the mixture is separated in the accumulator 24 in which low pressure liquid refrigerant is collected at the bottom and low pressure gas refrigerant is drawn from the top into the compressor suction line via the U-tube 42. During the cooling mode, the controller 12 ensures that the purge valve 28 is closed to prevent the movement of high pressure liquid refrigerant into the accumulator 24. The temperature control system 10 remains in the cooling mode until a heating or defrost operation is needed. When a heating or defrost operation is needed, the controller switches to the condenser evacuation mode.

[0020] The condenser evacuation mode, illustrated in Fig. 2, is operated between the cooling and heating/defrost modes to move an optimal amount of refrigerant from the high pressure side to the low pressure side for use during the heating/defrost mode. During the condenser evacuation mode, the three-way valve 30 is in

the first position. Upon entering the condenser evacuation mode, the controller 12 opens the purge valve 28 to allow the passage of high pressure liquid refrigerant from the receiver 18 and the first heat exchanger 16 into the accumulator 24. Refrigerant introduced to the accumulator 24 becomes available for use during the heating/defrost cycle. The amount of refrigerant moved into the accumulator 24 must be large enough to provide adequate capacity for heating but not so much that the liquid refrigerant enters the compressor suction line, which can damage the compressor. The liquid level sensor 32 detects the presence of liquid at a predetermined optimal height. When the optimal height is detected, the liquid level sensor 32 sends a signal to the controller 12, which switches the three-way valve 30 to the second position in response to the signal by opening a pilot solenoid valve 36, as is well understood in the art, and initiates the heating/defrost mode. When the three-way valve 30 is switched to the second position, high pressure liquid refrigerant no longer enters the accumulator 24 by way of fluid conduit 34 and purge valve 28. The purge valve 28 may be closed to ensure that high pressure liquid refrigerant does not enter the accumulator 24; however, it is possible that the purge valve 28 may be open and still high pressure refrigerant will not enter the accumulator 24 because of the pressure increase in the accumulator 24 when the system is switched to the heating/defrost mode.

[0021] During the heating/defrost mode, illustrated in Fig. 3, the three-way valve 30 is in the second position. In the second position, refrigerant bypasses the first heat exchanger 16 and hot gas refrigerant is directed from the compressor 14 to the second heat exchanger 22 to heat the cargo space or to defrost the second heat exchanger coil. A pressure regulating device 38 (e.g., a differential pressure regulating (DPR) valve) is positioned between the compressor 14 and the second heat exchanger 22. Refrigerant is directed from the compressor 14 to the pressure regulating device 38 to the second heat exchanger 22, bypassing the expansion valve 20. The refrigerant goes through the second heat exchanger coil 22 where it is cooled and/or partially condensed. As the refrigerant passes through the second heat exchanger 22, the refrigerant releases heat either to ice formed on the external surfaces of the second heat exchanger 22 to thereby defrost the second heat exchanger 22, to air being directed into the cargo space to thereby heat the cargo space, or to both. The refrigerant enters the accumulator 24 where condensed liquid refrigerant is separated from vapor refrigerant. The vapor refrigerant returns to the compressor by way of U-tube 42 and is compressed to a high pressure and high temperature gas, and the cycle repeats. If cooling is demanded, the controller 12 switches to the refrigeration mode by switching the three-way valve 30 to the first position and closing the purge valve 28.

[0022] Thus, the invention provides, among other things, a temperature control system 10 having a con-

troller 12 operable to switch the system from a cooling circuit to a heating/defrost circuit in response to a signal from a liquid level sensor 32 indicating that an optimal level of liquid refrigerant has accumulated in the accumulator 24. The features of the invention are set forth in the following claims.

Claims

1. A temperature control system comprising:

a compressor (14) configured to compress a heat transfer fluid;
 a first heat exchanger (16) in fluid communication with the compressor (14) and configured to receive the heat transfer fluid from the compressor (14) and to cool and condense the heat transfer fluid;
 a second heat (22) exchanger in fluid communication with the first heat exchanger (16) and the compressor (14) and configured to exchange heat with a temperature-controlled space;
 an accumulator (24) in fluid communication with the second heat exchanger (22) and the compressor (14) and configured to receive a mixture of liquid and vapor heat transfer fluid from the second heat exchanger (22) and direct a vapor portion of the heat transfer fluid to the compressor (14);
 a valve (30) in fluid communication with the first heat exchanger (16), the compressor (14), and the second heat exchanger (22), the valve (30) operable in a first position and a second position, wherein the first position is operable to direct the heat transfer fluid from the compressor (14) to the first heat exchanger (16) and the second position is operable to direct the heat transfer fluid from the compressor (14) to the second heat exchanger (22) without passing through the first heat exchanger (16); **characterised by:**
 a liquid level sensor (32) associated with the accumulator (24) and operable to generate a signal indicative of the level of the liquid heat transfer fluid inside the accumulator (24); and
 a controller (12) in electrical communication with the liquid level sensor (32) and the valve (30), wherein the controller (12) is adapted to receive the signal and move the valve (30) from the first position to the second position based on the signal.

2. The temperature control system of claim 1, wherein the first position corresponds to a cooling mode of the temperature control system and the second position corresponds to a heating mode of the temperature control system.

3. The temperature control system of claim 2, wherein the cooling mode defines a cooling circuit for cooling the temperature-controlled space, wherein the cooling circuit includes the compressor (14), the first heat exchanger (16), the second heat exchanger (22), and the accumulator (24) fluidly connected in series.

4. The temperature control system of claim 3, wherein the heating mode defines a heating circuit for at least one of defrosting the second heat exchanger (22) and heating the temperature-controlled space, wherein the heating circuit bypasses the first heat exchanger (16) and includes the compressor (14), the second heat exchanger (22), and accumulator (24) fluidly connected in series.

5. The temperature control system of claim 4, wherein the liquid level sensor (32) is operable to generate a signal indicative of an optimal level of liquid heat transfer fluid inside the accumulator (24), and wherein the controller (12) is operable to receive the signal indicative of the optimal level and to move the valve (30) to the second position.

6. The temperature control system of claim 5, wherein the optimum level includes a level of refrigerant that provides heating capacity during the heating mode, and wherein liquid heat transfer fluid at or below the optimum level does not enter the compressor (14).

7. The temperature control system of claim 4, further comprising a second valve (28) in fluid communication with the first heat exchanger (16) and the accumulator (24), the valve (28) operable in an open position and a closed position, wherein the open position is operable to direct at least a portion of the condensed heat transfer fluid from the first heat exchanger (16) to the accumulator (24) without passing through the second heat exchanger (22), and wherein the controller (12) is in electrical communication with the second valve (28) and operable to move the valve (28) between open and closed positions.

8. The temperature control system of claim 7, wherein the open position corresponding to a condenser evacuation mode of the temperature control system.

9. The temperature control system of claim 8, wherein the condenser evacuation mode defines an evacuation circuit configured to allow at least a portion of the condensed heat transfer fluid to enter the accumulator (24) from the first heat exchanger (16), bypassing the second heat exchanger (22), wherein the evacuation circuit includes the compressor (14), the first heat exchanger (16), and the accumulator (24) fluidly connected in series.

10. The temperature control system of claim 9, wherein

the temperature control system enters the condenser evacuation mode after the temperature control system exits the cooling mode and before the temperature control system enters the heating mode.

- 11.** A method of operating a temperature control system, the method comprising:

compressing a heat transfer fluid with a compressor (14);
directing the heat transfer fluid from the compressor (14) to a first heat exchanger (16) with a valve (30) in a first position;
cooling and condensing the heat transfer fluid from the compressor in the first heat exchanger (16);
exchanging heat with a temperature-controlled space with a second heat exchanger (22);
receiving a mixture of liquid and vapor heat transfer fluid from the second heat exchanger (22) into an accumulator (24);
directing a vapor portion of the heat transfer fluid in the accumulator (24) to the compressor (14);

characterised by:

generating with a liquid level sensor (32) associated with the accumulator (24) a signal indicative of the level of the liquid heat transfer fluid inside the accumulator (24);
receiving the signal with a controller (12);
moving the valve (30) with the controller (12) from the first position to a second position based on the signal; and
directing the heat transfer fluid from the compressor (14) to the second heat exchanger (22) without passing through the first heat exchanger (16) with the valve (30) in the second position.

- 12.** The method of claim 11, further comprising:

operating the temperature control system in a cooling mode when the valve (30) is in the first position; and
operating the temperature control system in a heating mode when the valve (30) is in the second position.

- 13.** The method of claim 12, further comprising:

fluidly connecting in series a cooling circuit including the compressor (14), the first heat exchanger (16), the second heat exchanger (22), and the accumulator (24) when operating in the cooling mode; and
cooling the temperature-controlled space when operating in the cooling mode.

- 14.** The method of claim 13, further comprising:

fluidly connecting in series a heating circuit including the compressor (14), the second heat exchanger (22), and accumulator (24) when operating in the heating mode;
bypassing the first heat exchanger (16) when operating in the heating mode; and
at least one of defrosting the second heat exchanger (22) and heating and the temperature-controlled space when operating in the heating mode.

- 15.** The method of claim 14, further comprising generating a signal indicative of an optimal level of liquid heat transfer fluid inside the accumulator (24), receiving the signal indicative of the optimal level with the controller (12); moving the valve (30) from the first position to the second position with the controller (12) based on the signal indicative of the optimal level.

- 16.** The method of claim 15, further comprising:

initiating the heating mode;
providing heating capacity in the heating mode when the heating mode is initiated with the optimum level of refrigerant in the accumulator (24); and
inhibiting liquid heat transfer fluid from entering the compressor (14) in the heating mode when the heating mode is initiated with the optimal level of refrigerant.

- 17.** The method of claim 14, further comprising directing at least a portion of the condensed heat transfer fluid from the first heat exchanger (16) to the accumulator (24) without passing through the second heat exchanger (22) with a second valve (28) in an open position.

- 18.** The method of claim 17, further comprising operating the temperature control system in a condenser evacuation mode when the second valve (28) is in the open position.

- 19.** The method of claim 18, further comprising moving the second valve (28) with the controller from the closed position to the open position;
fluidly connecting in series an evacuation circuit including the compressor (14), the first heat exchanger (16), and the accumulator (24) when operating in the condenser evacuation mode;
allowing at least a portion of the condensed heat transfer fluid to enter the accumulator (24) from the first heat exchanger (16) when operating in the condenser evacuation mode; and
bypassing the second heat exchanger (22) when op-

erating in the condenser evacuation mode.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising entering the condenser evacuation mode after the temperature control system exits the cooling mode and before the temperature control system enters the heating mode.

Patentansprüche

1. Temperaturregelungssystem, das Folgendes umfasst:

einen Verdichter (14), der dafür konfiguriert ist, ein Wärmeübertragungsfluid zu verdichten;
einen ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) in Fluidverbindung mit dem Verdichter (14) und dafür konfiguriert, das Wärmeübertragungsfluid von dem Verdichter (14) aufzunehmen und das Wärmeübertragungsfluid abzukühlen und zu kondensieren,
einen zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) in Fluidverbindung mit dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) und dem Verdichter (14) und dafür konfiguriert, Wärme mit einem temperaturgeregelten Raum auszutauschen,
einen Sammler (24) in Fluidverbindung mit dem zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) und dem Verdichter (14) und dafür konfiguriert, ein Gemisch aus flüssigem und dampfförmigem Wärmeübertragungsfluid von dem zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) aufzunehmen und einen dampfförmigen Anteil des Wärmeübertragungsfluids zu dem Verdichter (14) zu leiten,
ein Ventil (30) in Fluidverbindung mit dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16), dem Verdichter (14) und dem zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22), wobei das Ventil (30) in einer ersten Stellung und in einer zweiten Stellung funktionsfähig ist, wobei die erste Stellung dafür funktionsfähig ist, das Wärmeübertragungsfluid von dem Verdichter (14) zu dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) zu leiten, und die zweite Stellung dafür funktionsfähig ist, das Wärmeübertragungsfluid von dem Verdichter (14) zu dem zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) zu leiten, ohne dass es durch den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) hindurchgeht, **gekennzeichnet durch**;
einen Flüssigkeitspegelsensor (32), der mit dem Sammler (24) verknüpft und dafür funktionsfähig ist, ein Signal zu erzeugen, das den Pegel des flüssigen Wärmeübertragungsfluids innerhalb des Sammlers (24) anzeigt, und
ein Steuergerät (12) in elektrischer Verbindung mit dem Flüssigkeitspegelsensor (32) und dem Ventil (30), wobei das Steuergerät (12) dafür eingerichtet ist, das Signal zu empfangen und

das Ventil (30) auf der Grundlage des Signals von der ersten Stellung zu der zweiten Stellung zu bewegen.

2. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 1, wobei die erste Stellung einem Kühlungsmodus des Temperaturregelungssystems entspricht und die zweite Stellung einem Heizungsmodus des Temperaturregelungssystems entspricht.
3. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 2, wobei der Kühlungsmodus einen Kühlungskreislauf definiert, um die Temperatur des temperaturgeregelten Raumes abzukühlen, wobei der Kühlungskreislauf den Verdichter (14), den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16), den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) und den Sammler (24), fluidmäßig in Reihe verbunden, einschließt.
4. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 3, wobei der Heizungsmodus einen Heizungskreislauf definiert, um wenigstens den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) zu entfrosten und/oder den temperaturgeregelten Raum zu heizen, wobei der Heizungskreislauf den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) umgeht und den Verdichter (14), den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) und den Sammler (24), fluidmäßig in Reihe verbunden, einschließt.
5. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 4, wobei der Flüssigkeitspegelsensor (32) dafür funktionsfähig ist, ein Signal zu erzeugen, das einen optimalen Pegel des flüssigen Wärmeübertragungsfluids innerhalb des Sammlers (24) anzeigt, und wobei das Steuergerät (12) dafür eingerichtet ist, das Signal zu empfangen, das den optimalen Pegel anzeigt, und das Ventil (30) zu der zweiten Stellung zu bewegen.
6. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 5, wobei der optimale Pegel einen Kältemittelpegel einschließt, der eine Heizfähigkeit während des Heizungsmodus gewährleistet, und wobei das flüssige Wärmeübertragungsfluid bei oder unter dem optimalen Pegel nicht in den Verdichter (14) eintritt.
7. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 4, das ferner ein zweites Ventil (28) in Fluidverbindung mit dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) und dem Sammler (24) umfasst, wobei das Ventil (28) in einer offenen Stellung und in einer geschlossenen Stellung funktionsfähig ist, wobei die offene Stellung dafür funktionsfähig ist, wenigstens einen Anteil des kondensierten Wärmeübertragungsfluids von dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) zu dem Sammler (24) zu leiten, ohne dass es durch den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) hindurchgeht, und wobei das Steuergerät (12) in elektrischer Verbindung mit dem zweiten Ventil (28) und dafür funktionsfähig ist, das

Ventil (28) zwischen der offenen und der geschlossenen Stellung zu bewegen.

8. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 7, wobei die offene Stellung einem Kondensatorentleerungsmodus des Temperaturregelungssystems entspricht. 5
9. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 8, wobei der Kondensatorentleerungsmodus einen Entleerungskreis definiert, der dafür konfiguriert ist, zu ermöglichen, dass wenigstens ein Anteil des kondensierten Wärmeübertragungsfluids von dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) in den Sammler (24) eintritt, wobei es den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) umgeht, wobei der Entleerungskreis den Verdichter (14), den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) und den Sammler (24), fluidmäßig in Reihe verbunden, einschließt. 10
10. Temperaturregelungssystem nach Anspruch 9, wobei das Temperaturregelungssystem in den Kondensatorentleerungsmodus eintritt, nachdem das Temperaturregelungssystem den Kühlungsmodus verlässt und bevor das Temperaturregelungssystem in den Heizungsmodus eintritt. 15
11. Verfahren zum Betreiben eines Temperaturregelungssystems, wobei das Verfahren Folgendes umfasst: 20
das Verdichten eines Wärmeübertragungsfluids mit einem Verdichter (14),
das Leiten des Wärmeübertragungsfluids von dem Verdichter (14) zu einem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) mit einem Ventil (30) in einer ersten Stellung, 25
das Abkühlen und das Kondensieren des Wärmeübertragungsfluids aus dem Verdichter in den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16),
das Austauschen von Wärme mit einem temperaturgeregelten Raum mit einem zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22), 30
das Aufnehmen eines Gemischs aus flüssigem und dampfförmigem Wärmeübertragungsfluid aus dem zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) in einen Sammler (24),
das Leiten eines dampfförmigen Anteils des Wärmeübertragungsfluids in den Sammler (24) zu dem Verdichter (14), 35

gekennzeichnet durch:

das Erzeugen eines Signals, das den Pegel des flüssigen Wärmeübertragungsfluids innerhalb des Sammlers (24) anzeigt, mit einem Flüssigkeitspegelsensor (32), der mit dem Sammler (24) verknüpft ist, 40

das Empfangen des Signals mit einem Steuergerät (12),
das Bewegen des Ventils (30) von der ersten Stellung zu einer zweiten Stellung mit dem Steuergerät (12) auf der Grundlage des Signals und das Leiten des Wärmeübertragungsfluids von dem Verdichter (14) zu dem zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22), ohne dass es **durch** den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) hindurchgeht, mit dem Ventil (30) in der zweiten Stellung. 45

12. Verfahren nach Anspruch 11, das ferner Folgendes umfasst: 50

das Betreiben des Temperaturregelungssystems in einem Kühlungsmodus, wenn sich das Ventil (30) in der ersten Stellung befindet, und das Betreiben des Temperaturregelungssystems in einem Heizungsmodus, wenn sich das Ventil (30) in der zweiten Stellung befindet. 55

13. Verfahren nach Anspruch 12, das ferner Folgendes umfasst: 60

das fluidmäßig Verbinden eines Kühlungskreises in Reihe, der den Verdichter (14), den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16), den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) und den Sammler (24) einschließt, wenn es in dem Kühlungsmodus arbeitet, und
das Kühlen des temperaturgeregelten Raumes, wenn es in dem Kühlungsmodus arbeitet. 65

14. Verfahren nach Anspruch 13, das ferner Folgendes umfasst: 70

das fluidmäßig Verbinden eines Heizungskreises in Reihe, der den Verdichter (14), den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) und den Sammler (24) einschließt, wenn es in dem Heizungsmodus arbeitet,
das Umgehen des ersten Wärmeaustauschers (16), wenn es in dem Heizungsmodus arbeitet, und
wenigstens das Entfrosten des zweiten Wärmeaustauschers (22) und/oder das Heizen des temperaturgeregelten Raumes, wenn es in dem Heizungsmodus arbeitet. 75

15. Verfahren nach Anspruch 14, das ferner Folgendes umfasst: 80

das Erzeugen eines Signals, das einen optimalen Pegel des flüssigen Wärmeübertragungsfluids innerhalb des Sammlers (24) anzeigt,
das Empfangen des Signals, das den optimalen Pegel anzeigt, mit dem Steuergerät (12),
das Bewegen des Ventils (30) von der ersten 85

Stellung zu der zweiten Stellung mit dem Steuergerät (12) auf der Grundlage des Signals, das den optimalen Pegel anzeigt.

16. Verfahren nach Anspruch 15, das ferner Folgendes umfasst:

das Einleiten des Heizungsmodus, das Gewährleisten einer Heizfähigkeit in dem Heizungsmodus, wenn der Heizungsmodus mit dem optimalen Kältemittelpegel in dem Sammler (24) eingeleitet wird, und das Verhindern, dass das flüssige Wärmeübertragungsfluid in dem Heizungsmodus in den Verdichter (14) eintritt, wenn der Heizungsmodus mit dem optimalen Kältemittelpegel eingeleitet wird.

17. Verfahren nach Anspruch 14, das ferner Folgendes umfasst:

das Leiten wenigstens eines Anteils des kondensierten Wärmeübertragungsfluids von dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) zu dem Sammler (24), ohne dass es durch den zweiten Wärmeaustauscher (22) hindurchgeht, mit einem zweiten Ventil (28) in einer offenen Stellung.

18. Verfahren nach Anspruch 17, das ferner Folgendes umfasst:

das Betreiben des Temperaturregelungssystems in einem Kondensatorentleerungsmodus, wenn sich das zweite Ventil (28) in der offenen Stellung befindet.

19. Verfahren nach Anspruch 18, das ferner Folgendes umfasst:

das Bewegen des zweiten Ventils (28) von der geschlossenen Stellung zu der offenen Stellung mit dem Steuergerät, das fluidmäßige Verbinden eines Entleerungskreises in Reihe, der den Verdichter (14), den ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) und den Sammler (24) einschließt, wenn es in dem Kondensatorentleerungsmodus arbeitet, das Ermöglichen, dass wenigstens ein Anteil 1 des kondensierten Wärmeübertragungsfluids aus dem ersten Wärmeaustauscher (16) in den Sammler (24) eintritt, wenn es in dem Kondensatorentleerungsmodus arbeitet, und das Umgehen des zweiten Wärmeaustauschers (22), wenn es in dem Kondensatorentleerungsmodus arbeitet.

20. Verfahren nach Anspruch 19, das ferner Folgendes umfasst:

das Eintreten in den Kondensatorentleerungsmodus, nachdem das Temperaturregelungssystem den Kühlungsmodus verlässt und bevor das Temperaturregelungssystem in den Heizungsmodus eintritt.

Revendications

1. Système de régulation de la température, comprenant :

un compresseur (14), configuré de sorte à comprimer un fluide de transfert de chaleur ;
un premier échangeur de chaleur (16), en communication de fluide avec le compresseur (14), et configuré de sorte à recevoir le fluide de transfert de chaleur du compresseur (14), et à refroidir et condenser le fluide de transfert de chaleur ;
un deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), en communication de fluide avec le premier échangeur de chaleur (16) et le compresseur (14), et configuré de sorte à échanger la chaleur avec un espace à régulation de la température ;
un accumulateur (24), en communication de fluide avec le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) et le compresseur (14), et configuré de sorte à recevoir un mélange de fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide et sous forme de vapeur du deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), et à diriger une partie de vapeur du fluide de transfert de chaleur vers le compresseur (14) ;
une soupape (30), en communication de fluide avec le premier échangeur de chaleur (16), le compresseur (14) et le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), la soupape (30) pouvant être actionnée dans une première position et une deuxième position, la première position servant à diriger le fluide de transfert de chaleur du compresseur (14) vers le premier échangeur de chaleur (16), et la deuxième position servant à diriger le fluide de transfert de chaleur du compresseur (14) vers le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), sans passer à travers le premier échangeur de chaleur (16) ; **caractérisé par**
un capteur du niveau du liquide (32), associé à l'accumulateur (24) et servant à émettre un signal indicatif du niveau de fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide à l'intérieur de l'accumulateur (24) ; et
un moyen de commande (12), en communication électrique avec le capteur du niveau du liquide (32) et la soupape (30), le moyen de commande (12) étant adapté pour recevoir le signal et pour déplacer la soupape (30) de la première position vers la deuxième position, sur la base du signal.

2. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la première position correspond à un mode de refroidissement du système de régulation de la température, la deuxième position correspondant à un mode de chauffage du système de régulation de la température. 5
3. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 2, dans lequel le mode de refroidissement définit un circuit de refroidissement, pour refroidir l'espace à régulation de la température, le circuit de refroidissement englobant le compresseur (14), le premier échangeur de chaleur (16), le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) et l'accumulateur (24), accouplés en série par le fluide. 10 15
4. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 3, dans lequel le mode de chauffage définit un circuit de chauffage pour exécuter au moins une opération, le dégivrage du deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) ou le chauffage de l'espace à régulation de la température, le circuit de chauffage contournant le premier échangeur de chaleur (16) et englobant le compresseur (14), le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) et l'accumulateur (24), connectés en série par le fluide. 20 25
5. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 4, dans lequel le capteur du niveau du liquide (32) sert à émettre un signal indicatif d'un niveau optimal du fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide à l'intérieur de l'accumulateur (24), le moyen de commande (12) servant à recevoir le signal indicatif du niveau optimal et à déplacer la soupape (30) vers la deuxième position. 30 35
6. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 5, dans lequel le niveau optimal englobe un niveau du réfrigérant fournissant une capacité de chauffage au cours du mode de chauffage, le fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide au niveau du niveau optimal ou au-dessous de celui-ci n'entrant pas dans le compresseur (14). 40
7. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 4, comprenant en outre une deuxième soupape (28), en communication de fluide avec le premier échangeur de chaleur (16) et l'accumulateur (24), la soupape (28) pouvant être actionnée dans une position ouverte et une position fermée, la position ouverte servant à diriger au moins une partie du fluide de transfert de chaleur condensé du premier échangeur de chaleur (16) vers l'accumulateur (24), sans passer à travers le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), le moyen de commande (12) étant en communication électrique avec la deuxième soupape (28) et servant à déplacer la soupape (28) entre les positions ouverte et fermée. 45 50 55
8. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 7, dans lequel la position ouverte correspond à un mode d'évacuation à condensation du système de régulation de la température.
9. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 8, dans lequel le mode d'évacuation à condensation définit un circuit d'évacuation, configuré de sorte à permettre l'entrée d'au moins une partie du fluide de transfert de chaleur condensé dans l'accumulateur (24) à partir du premier échangeur de chaleur (16), contournant le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), le circuit d'évacuation englobant le compresseur (14), le premier échangeur de chaleur (16) et l'accumulateur (24), connectés en série par le fluide.
10. Système de régulation de la température selon la revendication 9, dans lequel le système de régulation de la température rentre dans le mode d'évacuation à condensation après la sortie du système de régulation de la température du mode de refroidissement et avant l'entrée du système de régulation de la température dans le mode de chauffage.
11. Procédé d'actionnement d'un système de régulation de la température, le procédé comprenant les étapes ci-dessous :
 - compression d'un fluide de transfert de chaleur par un compresseur (14) ;
 - direction du fluide de transfert de chaleur du compresseur (14) vers un premier échangeur de chaleur (16), une soupape (30) se trouvant dans une première position ;
 - refroidissement et condensation du fluide de transfert de chaleur, du compresseur vers le premier échangeur de chaleur (16) ;
 - échange de chaleur avec un espace à régulation de la température par un deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) ;
 - réception d'un mélange de fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide et sous forme de vapeur du deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) et transfert de celui-ci dans un accumulateur (24) ;
 - direction d'une partie de vapeur du fluide de transfert de chaleur dans l'accumulateur (24) vers le compresseur (14) ;

caractérisé par les étapes ci-dessous :

génération, par un capteur du niveau du liquide (32) associé à l'accumulateur (24), d'un signal indicatif du niveau du fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide à l'intérieur de l'accumulateur (24) ;
 réception du signal par un moyen de commande (12) ;
 déplacement de la soupape (30) par le moyen

- de commande (12) de la première position vers une deuxième position, sur la base du signal ; et direction du fluide de transfert de chaleur du compresseur (14) vers le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), sans passer à travers le premier échangeur de chaleur (16), la soupape (30) se trouvant dans la deuxième position. 5
- 12.** Procédé selon la revendication 11, comprenant en outre les étapes ci-dessous : 10
- actionnement du système de régulation de la température dans un mode de refroidissement lorsque la soupape (30) se trouve dans la première position ; et 15
- actionnement du système de régulation de la température dans un mode de chauffage lorsque la soupape (30) se trouve dans la deuxième position. 20
- 13.** Procédé selon la revendication 12, comprenant en outre les étapes ci-dessous :
- connexion par le fluide et en série d'un circuit de refroidissement, englobant le compresseur (14), le premier échangeur de chaleur (16), le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) et l'accumulateur (24), lors du fonctionnement dans le mode de refroidissement ; et 25
- refroidissement de l'espace à régulation de la température lors du fonctionnement dans le mode de refroidissement. 30
- 14.** Procédé selon la revendication 13, comprenant en outre les étapes ci-dessous : 35
- connexion par le fluide et en série d'un circuit de chauffage, englobant le compresseur (14), le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) et l'accumulateur (24), lors du fonctionnement dans le mode de chauffage ; 40
- contournement du premier échangeur de chaleur (16) lors du fonctionnement dans le mode de chauffage ; et 45
- au moins une opération, un dégivrage du deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) ou un chauffage de l'espace à régulation de la température, lors du fonctionnement dans le mode de chauffage. 50
- 15.** Procédé selon la revendication 14, comprenant en outre les étapes ci-dessous :
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- génération d'un signal indicatif d'un niveau optimal du fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide à l'intérieur de l'accumulateur (24) ;
- réception du signal indicatif du niveau optimal , par le moyen de commande (12) ;
- déplacement de la soupape (30) de la première position vers la deuxième position par le moyen de commande (12), sur la base du signal indicatif du niveau optimal.
- 16.** Procédé selon la revendication 15, comprenant en outre les étapes ci-dessus
- initialisation du mode de chauffage ;
- fourniture d'une capacité de chauffage dans le mode de chauffage lors de l'initialisation du mode de chauffage en présence du niveau optimal de réfrigérant dans l'accumulateur (24) ; et
- empêchement d'une entrée du fluide de transfert de chaleur liquide dans le compresseur (14) dans le mode de chauffage, lors de l'initialisation du mode de chauffage en présence du niveau optimal du réfrigérant.
- 17.** Procédé selon la revendication 14, comprenant en outre les étapes ci-dessous :
- direction d'au moins une partie du fluide de transfert de chaleur condensé du premier échangeur de chaleur (16) vers l'accumulateur (24), sans passer à travers le deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22), une deuxième soupape (28) se trouvant dans une position ouverte.
- 18.** Procédé selon la revendication 17, comprenant en outre l'étape ci-dessous :
- actionnement du système de régulation de la température dans un mode d'évacuation à condensation lorsque la deuxième soupape (28) se trouve dans la position ouverte.
- 19.** Procédé selon la revendication 18, comprenant en outre les étapes ci-dessous
- déplacement de la deuxième soupape (28) par le moyen de commande de la position fermée vers la position ouverte ;
- connexion par le fluide et en série d'un circuit d'évacuation, englobant le compresseur (14), le premier échangeur de chaleur (16) et l'accumulateur (24), lors du fonctionnement dans le mode d'évacuation à condensation ;
- autorisation de l'entrée d'au moins une partie du fluide de transfert de chaleur condensé dans l'accumulateur (24) à partir du premier échangeur de chaleur (16), lors du fonctionnement dans le mode d'évacuation à condensation ; et
- contournement du deuxième échangeur de chaleur (22) lors du fonctionnement dans le mode d'évacuation à condensation.
- 20.** Procédé selon la revendication 19, comprenant en

autre l'étape ci-dessous :

entrée dans le mode d'évacuation à condensation après la sortie du système de régulation de la température du mode de refroidissement et avant l'entrée du système de régulation de la température dans le mode de chauffage.

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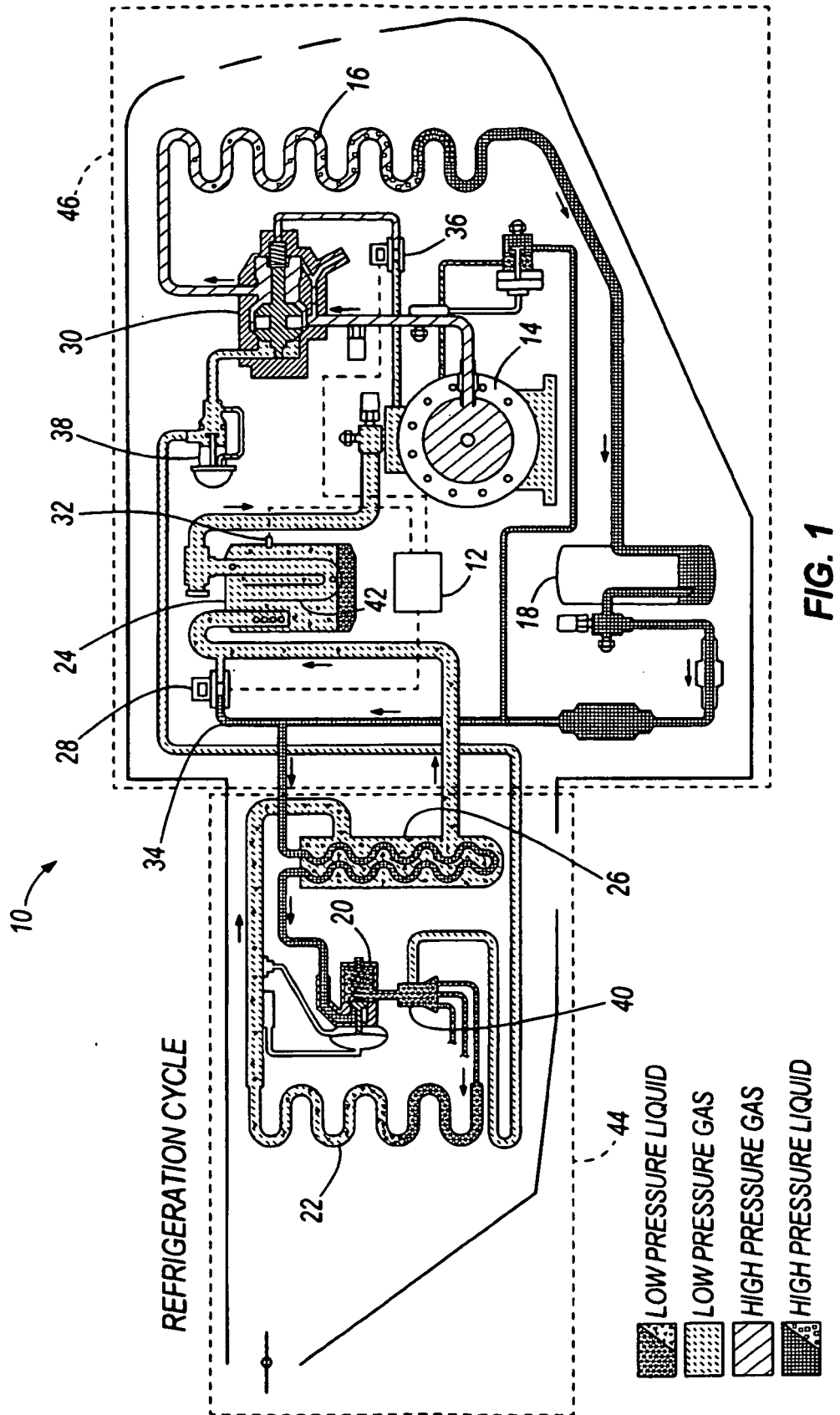
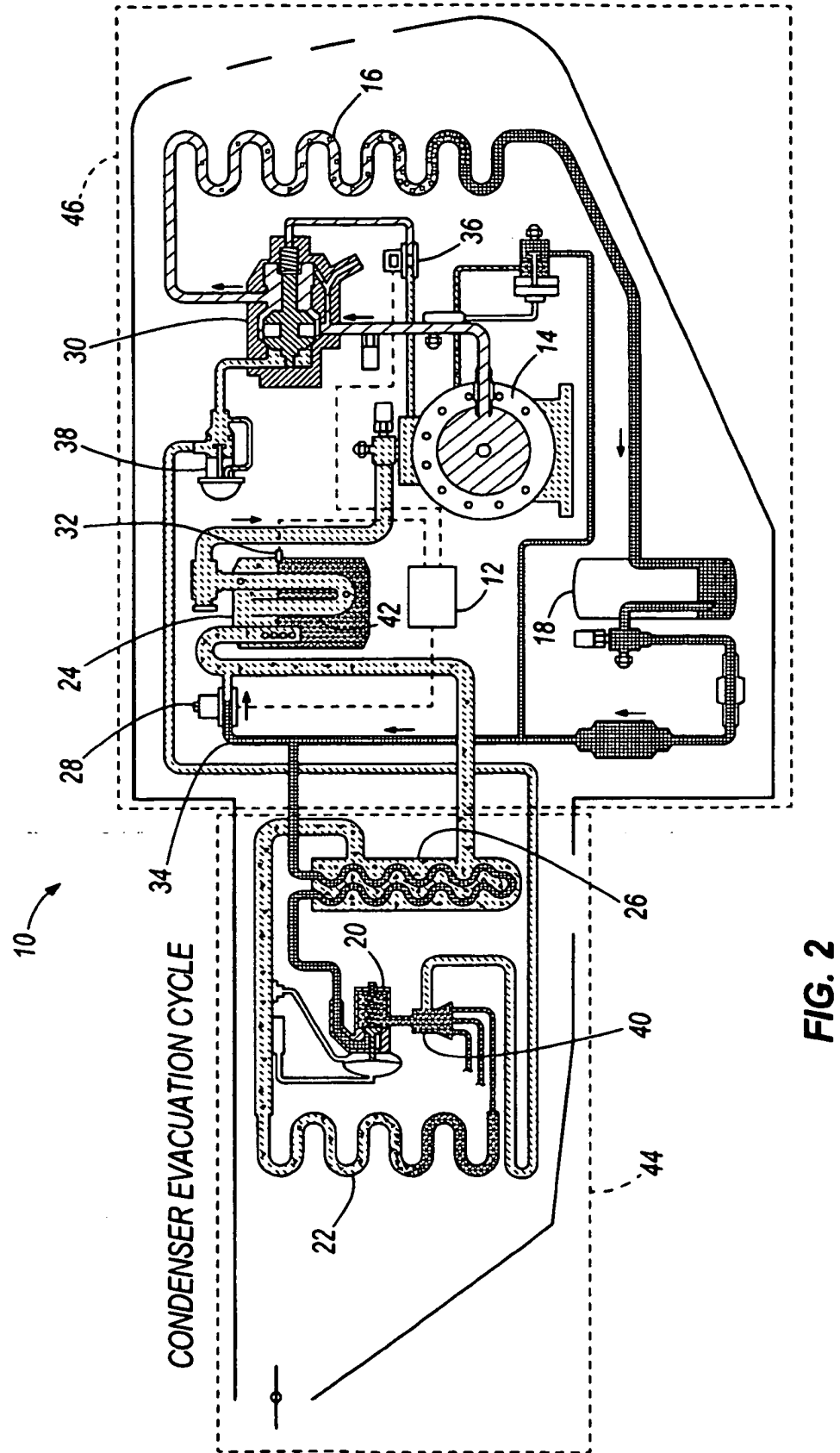
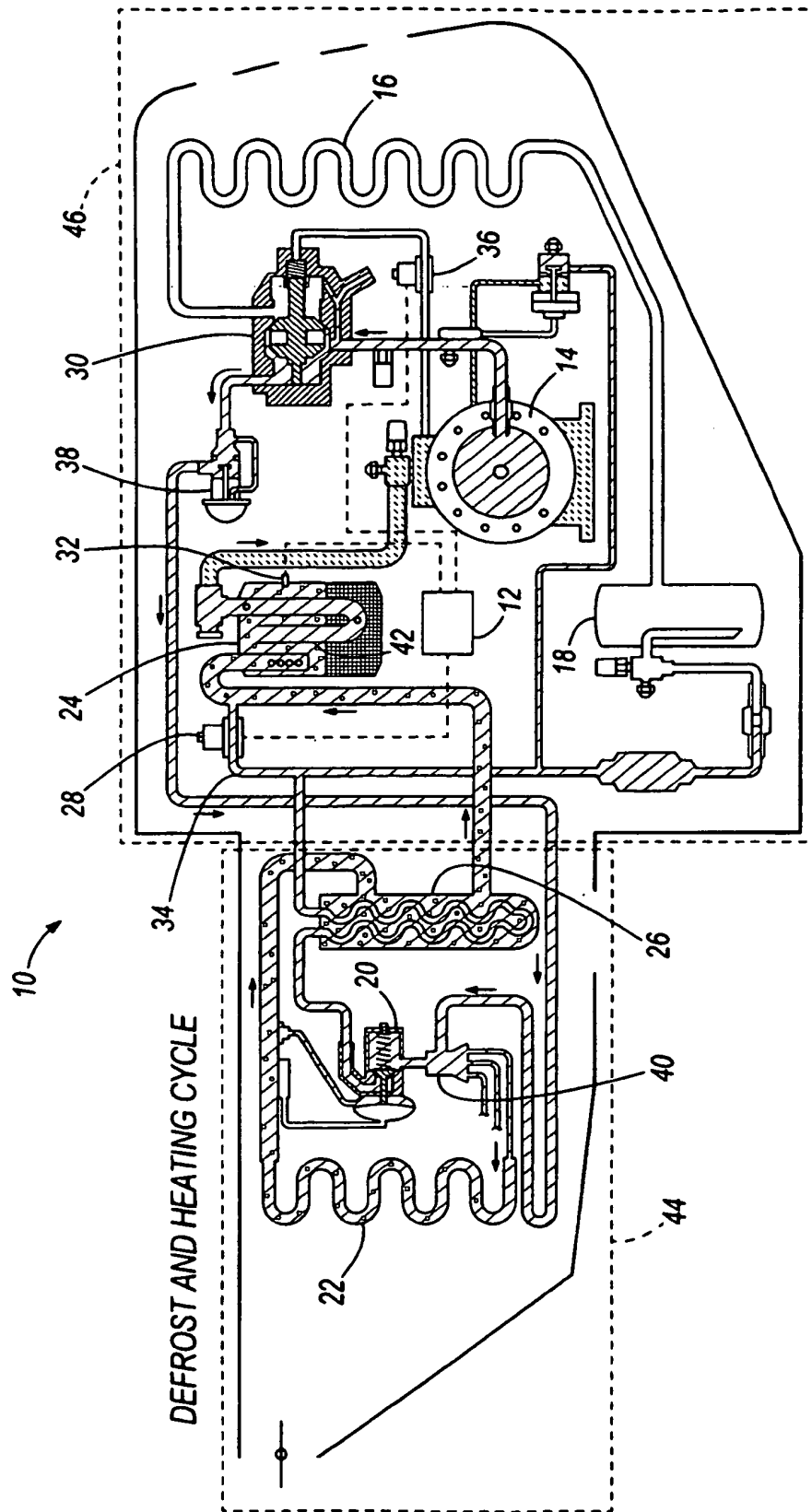


FIG. 1





REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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