

[DESCRIPTION]

[Title of Invention]

HEAT PUMP SYSTEM

[Technical Field]

[0001] The present invention relates to a heat pump system.

[Background Art]

[0002] A heat pump system that heats a liquid heating medium such as water by using heat absorbed from outside air is widely used. As such a heat pump system, PTL 1 discloses a technique related to a heat pump water heater that heats water serving as a liquid heating medium. In this technique, in a heat exchanger, heat exchange between a refrigerant flowing in a refrigeration cycle and water flowing in an internal portion is performed.

[Citation List]

[Patent Literature]

[0003]

[PTL 1] Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2012-117776

[Summary of Invention]

[Technical Problem]

[0004] As in the heat pump water heater in PTL 1, in a heating heat exchanger of the heat pump system, heat exchange between the refrigerant heated by heat absorbed from the outside air and the liquid heating medium is performed. Consequently, a problem arises in that the surface of a refrigerant pipe of the heating heat exchanger is cooled by the liquid heating medium during the operation of a heat pump cycle, and condensation forms. Dew condensation water causes corrosion of the pipe, and hence it is preferable to speedily remove the dew condensation water generated on the surface of the refrigerant pipe.

[0005] The present invention has been made in order to solve the above problem, and an object thereof is to provide a heat pump system capable of removing condensation having formed in a heating heat exchanger during the operation of a heat pump cycle, and preventing occurrence of corrosion by dew condensation water.

[Solution to Problem]

[0006] A heat pump system according to the present invention is a heat pump system including: a compressor configured to compress a refrigerant; a heating heat exchanger configured to exchange heat between the refrigerant compressed by the compressor and a liquid

heating medium; a decompression device configured to decompress the refrigerant; an evaporator configured to exchange heat between the refrigerant decompressed by the decompression device and outside air; a blower configured to blow air to the evaporator; and a control device configured to control operations of the compressor and the blower, wherein the control device is configured to perform a condensation removal operation in which the blower is stopped and the compressor is operated after stopping an operation for heating the heating medium by driving the compressor and the blower.

[Advantageous Effects of Invention]

[0007] According to the heat pump system of the present invention, it is possible to introduce a high-temperature refrigerant into the heating heat exchanger after the operation of the heat pump cycle is stopped, and hence it is possible to speedily remove the condensation having formed on the surface of a pipe of the heating heat exchanger during the operation without allowing the condensation to build up. With this, the corrosion of the heating heat exchanger caused by the dew condensation water is prevented.

[Brief Description of Drawings]

[0008]

Fig. 1 is a configuration diagram showing a heat pump system of Embodiment 1.

Fig. 2 is a control block diagram of the heat pump system of Embodiment 1.

Fig. 3 is a time chart showing the operation of each of a compressor, a blower, a circulation pump, and a decompression device in a condensation removal operation of Embodiment 1.

Fig. 4 is a flowchart showing the control routine of the condensation removal operation executed in the heat pump system of Embodiment 1.

Fig. 5 is a view showing an example of a map in which an operating frequency corresponding to an outside air temperature is specified.

Fig. 6 is a view showing another example of the map in which the operating frequency corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified.

Fig. 7 is a time chart showing the operation of each of the compressor, the blower, the circulation pump, and the decompression device in the condensation removal operation of Embodiment 2.

Fig. 8 is a flowchart showing the control routine of the condensation removal operation executed in the heat pump system of Embodiment 2.

Fig. 9 is a view showing an example of a map in which the opening of the decompression device corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified.

Fig. 10 is a view showing another example of the map in which the opening of the decompression device corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified.

Fig. 11 is a time chart showing the operation of each of the compressor, the blower, the circulation pump, and the decompression device in the condensation removal operation of Embodiment 3.

Fig. 12 is a flowchart showing the control routine of the condensation removal operation executed in the heat pump system of Embodiment 3.

Fig. 13 is a view showing an example of a map in which a circulation flow rate corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified.

Fig. 14 is a view showing another example of the map in which the circulation flow rate corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified.

Fig. 15 is a view showing an example of a map in which the circulation flow rate corresponding to an outlet temperature is specified.

Fig. 16 is a view showing another example of the map in which the circulation flow rate corresponding to the outlet temperature is specified.

Fig. 17 is a view showing an example of the hardware configuration of a first controller or a second controller provided in the heat pump system of Embodiments.

Fig. 18 is a view showing another example of the hardware configuration of the first controller or the second controller provided in the heat pump system of Embodiments.

[Description of Embodiments]

[0009] Hereinbelow, Embodiments will be described with reference to the drawings.

Common elements in the drawings are designated by the same reference numerals, and the duplicate description thereof will be simplified or omitted. Note that, in principle, the numbers, positions, orientations, shapes, and sizes of devices, appliances, and components in the present invention are not limited to the numbers, positions, orientations, shapes, and sizes thereof shown in the drawings.

[0010] Embodiment 1

[Configuration of Embodiment 1]

Fig. 1 is a configuration diagram showing a heat pump system of Embodiment 1. As shown in Fig. 1, a heat pump system 100 of the present embodiment includes a compressor 1, a

heating heat exchanger 2, a decompression device 3, an evaporator 4, and a blower 7.

[0011] The compressor 1 compresses refrigerant gas. The type of a refrigerant is not particularly limited. The refrigerant may be carbon dioxide that allows the pressure of a high-pressure refrigerant compressed by the compressor 1 to reach supercritical pressure, or may also be a refrigerant that makes the pressure of the high-pressure refrigerant compressed by the compressor 1 lower than critical pressure. The heating heat exchanger 2 heats a heating medium by exchanging heat between the high-pressure refrigerant compressed by the compressor 1 and a liquid heating medium. As the heating medium, it is possible to use, e.g., water, a calcium chloride aqueous solution, an ethylene glycol aqueous solution, or alcohol. In the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1, water is used as the heating medium.

[0012] The heating heat exchanger 2 has a refrigerant passage and a heating medium passage. The compressor 1, the refrigerant passage of the heating heat exchanger 2, the decompression device 3, and the evaporator 4 are annularly connected to each other via a refrigerant pipe 18, and a refrigerant circuit is thereby formed. The heat pump system 100 performs the operation of a heat pump cycle, i.e., a refrigeration cycle by using this refrigerant circuit.

[0013] The decompression device 3 decompresses the high-pressure refrigerant having passed through the heating heat exchanger 2. The decompression device 3 is configured as, e.g., an electronically controlled expansion valve capable of varying an opening or the like, and the opening is controlled by a first controller described later. The high-pressure refrigerant becomes a low-pressure refrigerant in a gas-liquid two-phase state by passing through the decompression device 3. The evaporator 4 is a heat exchanger that exchanges heat between the low-pressure refrigerant that is decompressed in the decompression device 3 and outside air. The outside air is outdoor air. The low-pressure refrigerant in the gas-liquid two-phase state evaporates by absorbing heat of the outside air in the evaporator 4. Low-pressure refrigerant gas having evaporated in the evaporator 4 is sucked into the compressor 1.

[0014] The blower 7 blows air such that the outside air is supplied to the evaporator 4. The blower 7 includes a fan 7a and a fan motor 7b. The fan 7a rotates by being driven by the fan motor 7b. The blower 7 blows air toward the outside from the inside of the refrigerant circuit in Fig. 1. The outside air passes through the evaporator 4 and the blower 7 in this order. The heat pump system 100 includes an outside air temperature sensor 12. The outside air temperature sensor 12 is an example of an outside air temperature detection device that detects an outside air temperature. The outside air temperature sensor 12 detects the temperature of

the outside air before being cooled in the evaporator 4.

[0015] The heat pump system 100 of the present embodiment includes a compressor outlet temperature sensor 11 for detecting a compressor outlet temperature that is the temperature of the high-pressure refrigerant compressed in the compressor 1. The compressor outlet temperature sensor 11 is an example of a compressor outlet temperature detection device that detects the compressor outlet temperature. In addition, the heat pump system 100 includes an evaporator outlet temperature sensor 10 for detecting an evaporator outlet temperature that is the temperature of the low-pressure refrigerant gas on the downstream side of the evaporator 4. The evaporator outlet temperature sensor 10 is an example of an evaporator outlet temperature detection device that detects the evaporator outlet temperature. Further, the heat pump system 100 includes an ammeter 14 that detects the current value of the compressor 1. The ammeter 14 is an example of a current detection device that detects the current value of the compressor 1.

[0016] The heat pump system 100 of the present embodiment includes a circulation pump 13, a heat storage tank 15, an outlet temperature sensor 8, and an inlet temperature sensor 9. The circulation pump 13 causes the heating medium to flow into the heating medium passage of the heating heat exchanger 2. The heat storage tank 15 can store the heating medium before and after the heating medium is heated. In the heat storage tank 15, a thermal stratification in which the upper side has a high temperature and the lower side has a low temperature due to a difference in the density of the heating medium caused by a difference in temperature may be formed. A plurality of temperature sensors (not shown) that detect the temperature distribution of the heating medium in a vertical direction in the heat storage tank 15 may be provided in the heat storage tank 15. It is possible to calculate the amount of stored heat of the heat storage tank 15 by detecting the temperature distribution of the heating medium in the vertical direction in the heat storage tank 15.

[0017] A first pipe 19 connects the lower portion of the heat storage tank 15 and the inlet of the heating medium passage of the heating heat exchanger 2. A second pipe 20 connects the outlet of the heating medium passage of the heating heat exchanger 2 and the upper portion of the heat storage tank 15. In the configuration shown in the drawing, the circulation pump 13 is disposed at some midpoint in the first pipe 19. The position of the circulation pump 13 is not limited to the position in the configuration shown in the drawing, and the circulation pump 13 may be disposed at some midpoint in the second pipe 20. By operating the circulation pump 13, the heating medium having flowed out from the lower portion of the heat storage tank 15 is

sent to the heating heat exchanger 2 through the first pipe 19. The heating medium heated in the heating heat exchanger 2 is sent to the upper portion of the heat storage tank 15 through the second pipe 20.

[0018] The outlet temperature sensor 8 detects an outlet temperature that is the temperature of the heating medium flowing out from the heating heat exchanger 2. The outlet temperature sensor 8 is an example of an outlet temperature detection device that detects the outlet temperature. The outlet temperature sensor 8 is installed in the second pipe 20. The outlet temperature sensor 8 detects the temperature of the heating medium after being heated in the heating heat exchanger 2. The inlet temperature sensor 9 detects an inlet temperature that is the temperature of the heating medium flowing into the heating heat exchanger 2. The inlet temperature sensor 9 is installed in the first pipe 19. The inlet temperature sensor 9 detects the temperature of the heating medium before being heated in the heating heat exchanger 2.

[0019] The heat storage tank 15 is connected to a supply destination of the heating medium via a pipe that is not shown. The supply destination of the heating medium may be a heating appliance for heating indoor air with heat of the heating medium in addition to a hot water faucet for supplying water serving as the heating medium. Note that, as the heating appliance, it is possible to use, e.g., a floor heating panel, a radiator, a panel heater, or a fan convactor. The heating medium heated in the heating heat exchanger 2 is supplied to the supply destination of the heating medium from the heat storage tank 15. However, the supply of the heating medium is not limited to that in the above-described configuration, and the heating medium heated in the heating heat exchanger 2 may also be directly supplied to the supply destination of the heating medium without the intervention of the heat storage tank 15.

[0020] Fig. 2 is a control block diagram of the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1. Hereinbelow, the configuration of the control system of the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1 will be described also with reference to Fig. 2.

[0021] The heat pump system 100 of the present embodiment includes a first controller 30 and a second controller 32 each serving as a control device. The compressor 1, the decompression device 3, the blower 7, the outside air temperature sensor 12, the outlet temperature sensor 8, the inlet temperature sensor 9, the evaporator outlet temperature sensor 10, the compressor outlet temperature sensor 11, and the ammeter 14 are electrically connected to the first controller 30. The first controller 30 controls the operation of each of the compressor 1, the decompression device 3, and the blower 7. The circulation pump 13 is electrically

connected to the second controller 32. The second controller 32 controls the operation of the circulation pump 13. In addition, the heat pump system 100 of the present embodiment includes a remote control device 34.

[0022] The first controller 30 and the second controller 32 are connected to each other by wired or wireless communication such that bidirectional data communication is allowed. The second controller 32 and the remote control device 34 are connected to each other by wired or wireless communication such that bidirectional data communication is allowed. The remote control device 34 is installed indoors. The remote control device 34 includes an operation unit such as a switch that is operated by a user, and a display unit that displays information on the state of the heat pump system 100 or the like.

[0023] The first controller 30 controls the operation of the compressor 1. The operating speed of the compressor 1 is variable. The first controller 30 can vary the operating speed of the compressor 1 by varying the operating frequency of a motor provided in the compressor 1 by inverter control. The operating speed of the compressor 1 increases as the operating frequency of the compressor 1 increases. As the operating speed of the compressor 1 increases, the circulation flow rate of the refrigerant increases, and the amount of heat supplied to the heating heat exchanger 2 by the refrigerant per unit time increases. Note that the amount of heat absorbed from the outside air by the refrigerant in the evaporator 4 increases as the outside air temperature increases. In the case where the operating frequency of the compressor 1 is constant, the amount of heat supplied to the heating heat exchanger 2 per unit time increases as the outside air temperature increases.

[0024] The first controller 30 controls the operation of the decompression device 3. The first controller 30 adjusts the pressure of the refrigerant introduced into the evaporator 4 by controlling the opening of the decompression device 3. In addition, the first controller 30 controls the operation of the blower 7. The first controller 30 adjusts the amount of heat absorbed from the outside air by the refrigerant in the evaporator 4 by controlling electric power supplied to the fan motor 7b.

[0025] The second controller 32 controls the operation of the circulation pump 13. The second controller 32 preferably drives the circulation pump 13 such that the flow rate of the heating medium that passes through the heating heat exchanger 2 is constant in terms of time. It is possible to improve the efficiency of the heat pump system 100 by making the flow rate of the heating medium that passes through the heating heat exchanger 2 constant in terms of time.

[0026] [Operation of Embodiment 1]

(Boiling operation)

The heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1 boils water serving as the heating medium in the heat storage tank 15 by a boiling operation. The boiling operation is executed by starting the operation of the heat pump cycle and driving the circulation pump 13. As a result, after low-temperature water that flows out from the lower portion of the heat storage tank 15 is guided to the heating heat exchanger 2 via the first pipe 19 and is heated, the low-temperature water becomes high-temperature water, and the high-temperature water flows into the heat storage tank 15 from the upper portion of the heat storage tank 15 via the second pipe 20 and is stored. By executing the above boiling operation, the high-temperature water is stored from an upper layer portion inside the heat storage tank 15, and the layer of the high-temperature water gradually becomes thicker.

[0027] (Condensation removal operation)

Next, a condensation removal operation executed by the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1 will be described. During the execution of the boiling operation in which the heat pump cycle is operated, heat exchange between the refrigerant and the heating medium in the heating heat exchanger 2 is performed. At this point, condensation forms on the surface of the refrigerant pipe in the heating heat exchanger 2. When generated dew condensation water is left on the surface of the refrigerant pipe even after the stop of the boiling operation, the dew condensation water may cause the corrosion of the pipe. Consequently, it is preferable to speedily remove the dew condensation water adhering to the surface of the pipe of the heating heat exchanger 2.

[0028] To cope with this, in the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1, after the boiling operation is stopped, the condensation removal operation for removing the dew condensation water adhering to the surface of the refrigerant passage of the heating heat exchanger 2 is performed. Fig. 3 is a time chart showing the operation of each of the compressor 1, the blower 7, the circulation pump 13, and the decompression device 3 in the condensation removal operation. Hereinbelow, specific processes executed in the condensation removal operation will be described with reference to the time chart shown in Fig. 3.

[0029] Fig. 4 is a flowchart showing the control routine of the condensation removal operation executed in the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1. Note that the routine shown in Fig. 4 is executed subsequently to the end of the boiling operation.

[0030] In Step S11 of the routine shown in Fig. 4, the condensation removal operation is started. More specifically, when a time t_1 elapses after the stop of the boiling operation, the operation of the compressor 1 is started, and a state in which the operation of the blower 7 is stopped is maintained. The time chart in Fig. 3 shows the operations of the compressor 1 and the blower 7 described above. As the time t_1 , a predetermined value is read as a time required for the pressure in the refrigerant circuit formed by the refrigerant pipe 18 to become uniform. Note that the condition for start of the condensation removal operation is not limited to the lapse of the time t_1 . That is, pressure sensors may be disposed at several positions of the refrigerant pipe 18 and, when detected values of the pressure sensors become equal to each other, the condensation removal operation may be started. In addition, during a time period until the time t_1 elapses after the end of the boiling operation, the blower 7 may be driven. With this, it is possible to improve accuracy in the detection of the outside air temperature by the outside air temperature sensor 12.

[0031] The compressor 1 is driven during the condensation removal operation, and hence the refrigerant having high temperature and high pressure is sent out from the compressor 1. The refrigerant having high temperature and high pressure that is sent out from the compressor 1 is then introduced into the heating heat exchanger 2. With this, the heating heat exchanger 2 is heated, and hence the condensation adhering to the surface of the refrigerant passage of the heating heat exchanger 2 is removed. Note that the high-temperature refrigerant circulates in the refrigerant circuit during the condensation removal operation, and hence the high-temperature refrigerant is also introduced into the evaporator 4. Consequently, when the blower 7 is driven during the condensation removal operation, the temperature of the refrigerant may be reduced and an effect of removing the condensation in the heating heat exchanger 2 may be spoiled. To cope with this, in the heat pump system of Embodiment 1, the operation of the blower 7 is stopped during the condensation removal operation, and the evaporator 4 is thereby prevented from being cooled.

[0032] It is preferable to set the operating frequency of the compressor 1 during the condensation removal operation to a value in a range that prevents a design provision pressure of the refrigerant pipe 18 from being exceeded and prevents a vibration caused by the compressor 1 from exceeding a prescribed value of stress of the refrigerant pipe 18. With this, it is possible to obtain an effect of reducing power consumption, an effect of preventing an increase in refrigerant pressure, and an effect of preventing sound and vibrations, and it

becomes possible to provide the heat pump system 100 having high reliability.

[0033] Note that the operating frequency of the compressor 1 during the condensation removal operation may be changed according to the outside air temperature. Fig. 5 is a view showing an example of a map in which the operating frequency corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified. In the example shown in the drawing, the operating frequency of the compressor 1 is specified so as to decrease linearly as the outside air temperature increases. The temperature of the heating heat exchanger 2 increases more easily as the outside air temperature becomes higher. That is, the necessity to increase the temperature of the refrigerant by the operation of the compressor 1 becomes lower as the outside air temperature becomes higher. Consequently, when the operating frequency of the compressor 1 is determined according to the outside air temperature based on the relation shown in Fig. 5, it becomes possible to further improve the effect of reducing power consumption, the effect of preventing an increase in refrigerant pressure, and the effect of preventing sound and vibrations described above.

[0034] As the outside air temperature used in the determination of the operating frequency, it is possible to use a value that is detected at any timing during a time period from the end of the boiling operation to the start of the condensation removal operation. In addition, the outside air temperature may be detected and the operating frequency may be updated during the condensation removal operation.

[0035] Incidentally, the relation of the operating frequency with respect to the outside air temperature is not limited to that shown in Fig. 5. Fig. 6 is a view showing another example of the map in which the operating frequency corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified. In the map shown in Fig. 6, the operating frequency is specified such that the outside air temperature exhibits hysteresis, and the operating frequency decreases stepwise as the outside air temperature increases. When the operating frequency of the compressor 1 is determined according to the outside air temperature based on the relation shown in Fig. 6, even in the case where the outside air temperature is detected and the operating frequency is updated at any interval during the condensation removal operation, it becomes possible to eliminate complicated change of the operating frequency to improve control stability.

[0036] Returning to the routine shown in Fig. 4 again, in the next Step S12, it is determined whether or not an end condition of the condensation removal operation is satisfied. More specifically, it is determined whether or not any one of the following five end conditions is met.

[0037] In the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 1, the lapse of a preset time after the start of the operation of the compressor 1 is a first end condition. As the preset time, it is possible to use, e.g., a time preset by an experiment or the like as a time required to remove the condensation having formed in the heating heat exchanger 2. With this, it becomes possible to remove the condensation having formed in the heating heat exchanger 2 without consuming electricity uselessly.

[0038] A second end condition is that the evaporator outlet temperature detected by the evaporator outlet temperature sensor 10 is not less than a preset limit temperature. As the limit temperature in this condition, it is possible to use a value of not more than the upper limit temperature of the evaporator outlet temperature for preventing the pressure in the refrigerant circuit from exceeding a permissible limit. For example, the upper limit temperature is set to a value lower than the maximum value of the evaporator outlet temperature during the boiling operation. The refrigerant pipe 18 on the downstream side of the evaporator 4 is designed based on the assumption of low pressure. Consequently, it is possible to use the second end condition as the condition for preventing an abnormal increase in each of the refrigerant temperature and the refrigerant pressure of the portion of a low-temperature design circuit of the refrigerant circuit to secure the reliability of the system.

[0039] A third end condition is that the compressor outlet temperature detected by the compressor outlet temperature sensor 11 is not less than a preset limit temperature. As the limit temperature in this condition, it is possible to use a value of not more than the upper limit value of the compressor outlet temperature for preventing the pressure in the refrigerant circuit from exceeding the permissible limit. For example, the upper limit value is set to a value lower than the maximum value of the compressor outlet temperature during the boiling operation. The refrigerant pipe 18 on the downstream side of the compressor 1 is designed based on the assumption of high pressure. Consequently, it is possible to use the third end condition as the condition for preventing an abnormal increase in each of the refrigerant temperature and the refrigerant pressure of the portion of a high-pressure design circuit of the refrigerant circuit to secure the reliability of the system. In the case where the opening of the decompression device 3 is set to the opening on a closing side, the evaporator outlet temperature becomes low, but the compressor outlet temperature becomes high. In such a case, it is difficult to determine an excessive increase in the pressure of the refrigerant circuit by using the second end condition, and hence the effectiveness of the third end condition is further increased.

[0040] A fourth end condition is that the outlet temperature detected by the outlet temperature sensor 8 is not less than a present limit temperature. As the limit temperature in this condition, it is possible to use, e.g., a value of not more than the upper limit temperature of the outlet temperature for preventing a permissible limit of the heating heat exchanger 2 from being exceeded. With this, it is possible to prevent an abnormal increase in outlet temperature to secure the reliability of the system. Note that the effectiveness of the fourth end condition is increased particularly when the circulation pump 13 is operated.

[0041] A fifth end condition is that the current value detected by the ammeter 14 is not less than a preset limit current value. The refrigerant pressure on the downstream side of the compressor 1 is correlated with the current value of the compressor 1. Accordingly, as the limit current value in this condition, it is possible to use a value of not more than the current value corresponding to a permissible limit of the refrigerant pressure on the downstream side of the compressor 1. Consequently, it is possible to use the fifth end condition as the condition for preventing an abnormal increase in the refrigerant pressure of the portion of the high-pressure design circuit of the refrigerant circuit to secure the reliability of the system. Note that the effectiveness of the fifth end condition is increased particularly in the case where a pressure sensor for detecting the refrigerant pressure on the downstream side of the compressor 1 is not provided.

[0042] Note that, in Step S12, it is determined whether or not any one of the five end conditions described above is met. However, in Step S12, it may be determined whether or not only one of the five end conditions described above is met, or it may be determined whether or not any one of a plurality of freely-selected end conditions is met.

[0043] In the case where the determination is not met as the result of the process in Step S12, the routine moves to Step S12 again, and it is determined whether or not the end condition is met. On the other hand, in the case where the determination is met in Step S12 described above, the routine moves to the next Step S13. In Step S13, the operation of the compressor 1 is stopped.

[0044] Thus, according to the condensation removal operation in the heat pump system of Embodiment 1, it is possible to raise the temperature of the refrigerant passage of the heating heat exchanger 2 to a high temperature, and hence it is possible to speedily remove the condensation having formed on the surface of the refrigerant passage during the boiling operation without allowing the condensation to build up. With this, it is possible to prevent the

corrosion of the pipe of the heating heat exchanger 2 without reducing the reliability of the heat pump system related to resistance to pressure, sound, and vibrations.

[0045] Incidentally, in the heat pump system of Embodiment 1 described above, the condensation removal operation is executed subsequently to the end of the boiling operation. However, the time when the condensation removal operation can be executed is not limited to the above time. That is, the condensation removal operation may be performed again during a time period from the end of the condensation removal operation to the start of the next boiling operation. This applies to the heat pump systems of other embodiments described later.

[0046] Embodiment 2

Next, the heat pump system of Embodiment 2 will be described with reference to the drawings. The heat pump system of Embodiment 2 is implemented by causing the control device to execute a routine shown in Fig. 8 that will be described later by using the same hardware configuration as that of Embodiment 1.

[0047] The heat pump system of Embodiment 2 is characterized in that the opening of the decompression device 3 is controlled in addition to the control of the compressor 1 and the blower 7 described above in the condensation removal operation. Fig. 7 is a time chart showing the operation of each of the compressor 1, the blower 7, the circulation pump 13, and the decompression device 3 in the condensation removal operation. Hereinbelow, specific processes executed in the condensation removal operation will be described with reference to the time chart shown in Fig. 7.

[0048] Fig. 8 is a flowchart showing the control routine of the condensation removal operation executed in the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 2. Note that the routine shown in Fig. 8 is executed subsequently to the end of the boiling operation.

[0049] In Step S21 of the routine shown in Fig. 8, the opening of the decompression device 3 is controlled to a preset opening. Note that the opening in this step is, e.g., the opening of not less than the minimum opening in the boiling operation. The time chart in Fig. 7 shows the operation of the decompression device 3 described above. The opening of the decompression device 3 may also be set to a fully opened state. As the opening of the decompression device 3 decreases, the pressure of the low-pressure refrigerant on the downstream side of the decompression device 3 decreases, but the pressure of the high-pressure refrigerant on the downstream side of the compressor 1 increases. Consequently, when the opening of the decompression device 3 is controlled so as to be not less than the minimum opening in the

boiling operation, it is possible to prevent the pressure of the high-pressure refrigerant from becoming higher than the maximum pressure during the boiling operation.

[0050] Note that the opening of the decompression device 3 during the condensation removal operation may be changed according to the outside air temperature. Fig. 9 is a view showing an example of a map in which the opening of the decompression device 3 corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified. In the example shown in the drawing, the opening of the decompression device 3 is specified so as to increase linearly as the outside air temperature increases. As described above, the temperature of the heating heat exchanger 2 increases more easily as the outside air temperature becomes higher. That is, as the outside air temperature becomes higher, the possibility that the temperature and the pressure of the refrigerant in the refrigerant circuit will excessively increase becomes higher. Consequently, when the opening of the decompression device 3 is determined according to the outside air temperature based on the relation shown in Fig. 9, it is possible to obtain the effect of further improving the effect of preventing an increase in refrigerant pressure to secure the reliability of the system.

[0051] Incidentally, the relation of the opening of the decompression device 3 with respect to the outside air temperature is not limited to that in Fig. 9. Fig. 10 is a view showing another example of the map in which the opening of the decompression device 3 corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified. In the map shown in Fig. 10, the opening of the decompression device 3 is specified such that the outside air temperature exhibits hysteresis, and the opening of the decompression device 3 increases stepwise as the outside air temperature increases. When the opening of the decompression device 3 is determined according to the outside air temperature based on the relation shown in Fig. 10, even in the case where the outside air temperature is detected and the opening of the decompression device 3 is updated at any interval during the condensation removal operation, it becomes possible to eliminate complicated change of the opening of the decompression device 3 to improve control stability.

[0052] In the next Step S22, the condensation removal operation is started. Specifically, the same process as that in Step S11 described above is executed. In the next Step S23, it is determined whether or not the end condition of the condensation removal operation is satisfied. Specifically, the same process as that in Step S12 described above is executed. In the case where the determination is not met as the result of the process in Step S23, the routine moves to Step S23 again, and it is determined whether or not the end condition is met. On the other hand, in the case where the determination is met in Step S23 described above, the routine moves

to the next Step S24. In Step S24, the operation of the compressor 1 is stopped, and the opening of the decompression device 3 is controlled to the opening during standby.

[0053] Thus, according to the condensation removal operation in the heat pump system of Embodiment 2, it is possible to raise the temperature of the refrigerant pipe of the heating heat exchanger 2 to a high temperature, and hence it is possible to speedily remove the condensation having formed in the refrigerant pipe during the boiling operation without allowing the condensation to build up. With this, it is possible to prevent the corrosion of the pipe of the heating heat exchanger 2 without reducing the reliability of the heat pump system related to resistance to pressure, sound, and vibrations.

[0054] In addition, according to the heat pump system of Embodiment 2, the opening of the decompression device 3 is controlled in the condensation removal operation. With this, it is possible to prevent an excessive increase in each of the pressure and the temperature of the refrigerant of the refrigerant circuit to provide the heat pump system having high reliability.

[0055] Embodiment 3

Next, the heat pump system of Embodiment 3 will be described with reference to the drawings. The heat pump system of Embodiment 3 is implemented by causing the control device to execute the routine shown in Fig. 12 that will be described later by using the same hardware configuration as that of Embodiment 1.

[0056] The heat pump system of Embodiment 3 is characterized in that the operation of the circulation pump 13 is also controlled in addition to the control of the compressor 1 and the blower 7 described above in the condensation removal operation. Fig. 11 is a time chart showing the operation of each of the compressor 1, the blower 7, the circulation pump 13, and the decompression device 3 in the condensation removal operation. Hereinbelow, specific processes executed in the condensation removal operation will be described with reference to the time chart shown in Fig. 11.

[0057] Fig. 12 is a flowchart showing the control routine of the condensation removal operation executed in the heat pump system 100 of Embodiment 3. Note that the routine shown in Fig. 12 is executed subsequently to the end of the boiling operation.

[0058] In Step S31 of the routine shown in Fig. 12, the operation of the circulation pump 13 is started. Note that the circulation flow rate of the heating medium of the circulation pump 13 is set to be not more than the maximum circulation flow rate during the boiling operation. The time chart in Fig. 11 shows the operation of the circulation pump 13 described above. With

this, it is possible to prevent an excessive increase in the temperature of the heating medium in the heating heat exchanger 2.

[0059] Note that the circulation flow rate of the heating medium of the circulation pump 13 during the condensation removal operation may be changed according to the outside air temperature. Fig. 13 is a view showing an example of a map in which the circulation flow rate corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified. In the example shown in the drawing, the circulation flow rate is specified so as to increase linearly as the outside air temperature increases. As described above, the temperature of the heating heat exchanger 2 increases more easily as the outside air temperature becomes higher. Consequently, when the circulation flow rate is determined according to the outside air temperature based the relation shown in Fig. 13, it is possible to obtain the effect of preventing an abnormal increase in the temperature of the heating medium in the heating heat exchanger 2 to secure the reliability of the system.

[0060] Incidentally, the relation of the circulation flow rate with respect to the outside air temperature is not limited to that in Fig. 13. Fig. 14 is a view showing another example of the map in which the circulation flow rate corresponding to the outside air temperature is specified. In the map shown in Fig. 14, the circulation flow rate is specified such that the outside air temperature exhibits hysteresis, and the circulation flow rate increases stepwise as the outside air temperature increases. When the circulation flow rate is determined according to the outside air temperature based on the relation shown in Fig. 15, even in the case where the outside air temperature is detected and the circulation flow rate is updated at any interval during the condensation removal operation, it becomes possible to eliminate complicated change of the circulation flow rate to improve control stability.

[0061] In the next Step S32, the condensation removal operation is started. Specifically, the same process as that in Step S11 described above is executed. In the next Step S33, it is determined whether or not the end condition of the condensation removal operation is satisfied. Specifically, the same process as that in Step S12 described above is executed. In the case where the determination is not met as the result of the process in Step S33, the routine moves to Step S33 again, and it is determined whether or not the end condition is met. On the other hand, in the case where the determination is met in Step S33 described above, the routine moves to the next Step S34. In Step S34, the operation of the circulation pump 13 is stopped, and the operation of the compressor 1 is stopped.

[0062] Thus, according to the condensation removal operation in the heat pump system of

Embodiment 3, it is possible to raise the temperature of the refrigerant pipe of the heating heat exchanger 2 to a high temperature, and hence it is possible to speedily remove the condensation having formed in the refrigerant passage of the heating heat exchanger 2 during the boiling operation without allowing the condensation to build up. With this, it is possible to prevent the corrosion of the pipe of the heating heat exchanger 2 without reducing the reliability of the heat pump system related to resistance to pressure, sound, and vibrations.

[0063] In addition, according to the heat pump system of Embodiment 3, the operation of the circulation pump 13 is performed during the condensation removal operation. With this, an abnormal increase in the temperature of the heating medium is prevented in the heating heat exchanger 2, and hence the reliability of the system is increased.

[0064] Incidentally, in the heat pump system of Embodiment 3 described above, the circulation flow rate of the circulation pump 13 is set according to the outside air temperature. However, the setting of the circulation flow rate is not limited to the method that sets the circulation flow rate according to the outside air temperature, and the circulation flow rate may also be set according to the outlet temperature of the heating medium of the heating heat exchanger 2. Fig. 15 is a view showing an example of a map in which the circulation flow rate corresponding to the outlet temperature is specified. In the example shown in the drawing, the circulation flow rate is specified so as to increase linearly as the outlet temperature increases. This means that the temperature of the heating heat exchanger 2 increases as the outlet temperature of the heating heat exchanger 2 increases. Consequently, when the circulation flow rate is determined according to the outlet temperature based on the relation shown in Fig. 15, it is possible to prevent an abnormal increase in the temperature of the heating medium in the heating heat exchanger 2 without consuming electricity uselessly.

[0065] The relation of the circulation flow rate with respect to the outlet temperature is not limited to that in Fig. 15. Fig. 16 is a view showing another example of the map in which the circulation flow rate corresponding to the outlet temperature is specified. In the map shown in Fig. 16, the circulation flow rate is specified such that the outlet temperature exhibits hysteresis, and the circulation flow rate increases stepwise as the outlet temperature increases. When the circulation flow rate is determined according to the outlet temperature based on the relation shown in Fig. 16, even in the case where the outlet temperature is detected and the circulation flow rate is updated at any interval during the condensation removal operation, it becomes possible to eliminate complicated change of the circulation flow rate to improve control

stability.

[0066] The control device provided in the heat pump system of each of Embodiments 1 to 3 may be configured in the following manner. Fig. 17 is a view showing an example of the hardware configuration of the first controller 30 or the second controller 32 provided in the heat pump system 100 of Embodiments. The individual functions of the first controller 30 are implemented by processing circuitry. The individual functions of the second controller 32 are implemented by processing circuitry. In the example shown in Fig. 17, the processing circuitry of the first controller 30 includes at least one processor 301 and at least one memory 302. The processing circuitry of the second controller 32 includes at least one processor 321 and at least one memory 322.

[0067] In the case where the processing circuitry includes at least one processor 301 or 321 and at least one memory 302 or 322, the individual functions of the first controller 30 or the second controller 32 are implemented by software, firmware, or a combination of software and firmware. At least one of the software and the firmware is described as a program. At least one of the software and the firmware is stored in at least one memory 302 or 322. At least one processor 301 or 321 implements the individual functions of the first controller 30 or the second controller 32 by reading and executing a program stored in at least one memory 302 or 322.

At least one processor 301 or 321 is also referred to as a CPU (Central Processing Unit), a central processor, a processing unit, an arithmetic unit, a microprocessor, a microcomputer, or a DSP (Digital Signal Processor). At least one memory 302 or 322 is, e.g., a non-volatile or volatile semiconductor memory such as a RAM (Random Access Memory), a ROM (Read Only Memory), a flash memory, an EPROM (Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory), or an EEPROM (Electrically Erasable Programmable Read-Only Memory), a magnetic disk, a flexible disk, an optical disk, a compact disc, a minidisc, or a DVD (Digital Versatile Disc).

[0068] Fig. 18 is a view showing another example of the hardware configuration of the first controller 30 or the second controller 32 provided in the heat pump system 100 of Embodiments. In the example shown in Fig. 18, the processing circuitry of the first controller 30 includes at least one dedicated hardware 303. The processing circuitry of the second controller 32 includes at least one dedicated hardware 323.

[0069] In the case where the processing circuitry includes at least one dedicated hardware 303 or 323, the processing circuitry is, e.g., a single circuit, a composite circuit, a programmed processor, a parallel-programmed processor, an ASIC (Application Specific Integrated Circuit),

an FPGA (Field-Programmable Gate Array), or a combination thereof. The functions of the individual units of the first controller 30 or the second controller 32 may be implemented individually by the processing circuitry. In addition, the functions of the individual units of the first controller 30 or the second controller 32 may also be implemented collectively by the processing circuitry.

[0070] Further, part of the individual functions of the first controller 30 may be implemented by the dedicated hardware 303, and the other part thereof may be implemented by software or firmware. Thus, the processing circuitry implements the individual functions of the first controller 30 by the hardware 303, the software, the firmware, or a combination thereof.

[0071] Furthermore, part of the individual functions of the second controller 32 may be implemented by the dedicated hardware 323, and the other part thereof may be implemented by software or firmware. Thus, the processing circuitry implements the individual functions of the second controller 32 by the hardware 323, the software, the firmware, or a combination thereof.

[0072] In the present embodiment, the first controller 30 and the second controller 32 cooperate with each other to control the operation of the heat pump system 100. However, the embodiment is not limited to such a configuration, and the operation of the heat pump system 100 may also be controlled by a single controller.

[Reference Signs List]

[0073]

100	Heat pump system
1	Compressor
2	Heating heat exchanger
3	Decompression device
4	Evaporator
7	Blower
7a	Fan
7b	Fan motor
8	Outlet temperature sensor
9	Inlet temperature sensor
12	Outside air temperature sensor
13	Circulation pump

14	Ammeter
15	Heat storage tank
18	Refrigerant pipe
19	First pipe
20	Second pipe
30	First controller
301	Processor
302	Memory
303	Hardware
32	Second controller
321	Processor
322	Memory
323	Hardware
34	Remote control device

[CLAIMS]

[Claim 1]

A heat pump system comprising:

- a compressor configured to compress a refrigerant;
- a heating heat exchanger configured to exchange heat between the refrigerant compressed by the compressor and a liquid heating medium;
- a decompression device configured to decompress the refrigerant;
- an evaporator configured to exchange heat between the refrigerant decompressed by the decompression device and outside air;
- a blower configured to blow air to the evaporator; and
- a control device configured to control operations of the compressor and the blower, wherein the control device is configured to perform a condensation removal operation for removing a condensation of the heating heat exchanger in which the blower is stopped and the compressor is operated after stopping an operation for heating the heating medium by driving the compressor and the blower.

[Claim 2]

The heat pump system according to Claim 1, further comprising:

- an outside air temperature detection device configured to detect an outside air temperature,

wherein

- the control device is configured to determine an operating frequency at which the compressor is operated according to the outside air temperature in the condensation removal operation.

[Claim 3]

The heat pump system according to Claim 2, wherein

- the control device determines the operating frequency such that the operating frequency decreases linearly as the outside air temperature increases.

[Claim 4]

The heat pump system according to Claim 2, wherein

- the control device determines the operating frequency such that the operating

frequency decreases stepwise as the outside air temperature increases.

[Claim 5]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein
the control device ends the condensation removal operation when a predetermined
time elapses after start of the condensation removal operation.

[Claim 6]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, further comprising:
an evaporator outlet temperature detection device configured to detect an evaporator
outlet temperature that is a temperature of the refrigerant flowing out from the evaporator,
wherein
the control device ends the condensation removal operation in a case where the
evaporator outlet temperature reaches a predetermined limit temperature.

[Claim 7]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, further comprising:
a compressor outlet temperature detection device configured to detect a compressor
outlet temperature that is a temperature of the refrigerant flowing out from the compressor,
wherein
the control device ends the condensation removal operation in a case where the
compressor outlet temperature reaches a predetermined limit temperature.

[Claim 8]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, further comprising:
a current detection device configured to detect a current value of the compressor,
wherein
the control device ends the condensation removal operation in a case where the current
value reaches a predetermined limit current value.

[Claim 9]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, further comprising:

an outlet temperature detection device configured to detect an outlet temperature that is a temperature of the heating medium flowing out from the heating heat exchanger, wherein the control device ends the condensation removal operation in a case where the outlet temperature reaches a predetermined limit temperature.

[Claim 10]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 9, wherein the control device opens the decompression device such that an opening of the decompression device is not less than a predetermined minimum opening in the condensation removal operation.

[Claim 11]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 9, further comprising: an outside air temperature detection device configured to detect an outside air temperature, wherein the control device determines an opening of the decompression device according to the outside air temperature in the condensation removal operation.

[Claim 12]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 11, further comprising: a pump configured to send the heating medium to the heating heat exchanger, wherein the control device operates the pump such that a flow rate of the heating medium sent to the heating heat exchanger is not more than a predetermined maximum flow rate in the condensation removal operation.

[Claim 13]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 11, further comprising: a pump configured to send the heating medium to the heating heat exchanger; and an outside air temperature detection device configured to detect an outside air temperature, wherein the control device determines a flow rate of the heating medium sent to the heating heat exchanger according to the outside air temperature in the condensation removal operation.

[Claim 14]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 11, further comprising:
a pump configured to send the heating medium to the heating heat exchanger; and
an outlet temperature detection device configured to detect an outlet temperature that
is a temperature of the heating medium flowing out from the heating heat exchanger, wherein
the control device determines a flow rate of the heating medium sent to the heating
heat exchanger according to the outlet temperature in the condensation removal operation.

[Claim 15]

The heat pump system according to any one of Claims 1 to 14, wherein
the control device is configured to perform the condensation removal operation after a
lapse of a predetermined time from stop of the operation for heating the heating medium by
driving the compressor and the blower.