



REDUCING YOUR REFRIGERATION COSTS IN A FOOD BUSINESS

If you're a food-related business operator then refrigeration costs could be adding significantly to your energy bills – and your carbon footprint.

There are some simple steps you can take to reduce your energy consumption and refrigeration costs.

Simple steps

- **Check the temperature**
Fridges operate most effectively at 3 to 4 degrees and freezers at -15 to -18 degrees. Using a thermometer inside the unit will help double check the thermostat is working properly.
- **Defrost**
Ice greater than 5mm in thickness acts as an insulator and increases energy consumption.
- **Dust off the coils**
Clean the condenser coils as dust prevents them from working properly.
- **Check seals, hinges, catches and insulation lines regularly**
Replace worn items to prevent cold air escaping. Keeping the unit level also helps it seal better.
- **Turn off the lights**
Turn off display lights in fridges overnight.

The best spot for the fridge

Keep cooling units away from direct sunlight, the oven and other hot spots. Similarly, leaving gaps around and above the fridge and freezer is important for ventilation. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions, but a clearance of at least 80mm is a good starting point.

Over and under filling

Fridges work better when they're at least two thirds full, and freezers at three quarter capacity. Empty space means energy goes into cooling air, rather than product. Be sure to distribute contents evenly.

- Fill gaps in your refrigerator with airtight containers or water.
- Fill gaps in your freezer with recycled crumpled up paper.

One full fridge is better than two half full fridges! Fill one up and turn off the other one to save you 50% of your energy costs.

Food storage 101

- Allow warm/hot food to cool briefly before putting it in the fridge or freezer.
- Think about what you need before opening the door - every time the door is opened cold air escapes and warm air gets in.
- Keep your fridge or freezer organized - place regularly used items towards the front.
- Cover food before placing it in the fridge - uncovered foods release moisture and make the fridge work harder.

Make your cool room work smarter, not harder

- When products are delivered, move them to the cool room quickly. If food is left outside it begins to warm up. This impacts on the quality and safety of the product, and increases the time they require to cool down once refrigerated.
- After stocktaking, keep the cool room closed for as long as possible to help it cool down again.
- Don't take items out one at a time: remove items in batches so the door is kept shut as much as possible.
- Always close the doors coming in and out of the cool room to keep the cold air in. If there's a lot of traffic, invest in some plastic strip curtains or swinging doors.

Look to a sustainable future

- If you are about to purchase new equipment, the latest high-efficiency models may cost more but they use around half as much energy, so are cheaper to run.
- 'Upside down' fridges (freezer on the bottom) are usually more efficient.
- While self-defrosting freezers are handy, they usually consume much more energy.
- The more stars the better.
- Think about your needs. It could be more efficient to order ice from a local manufacturer than using an icemaker. Icemakers are inefficient users of water and energy.

Helpful websites

resourcesmart.vic.gov.au
climatecommunities.vic.gov.au
originenergy.com.au