



A  Sempra Energy utility™

# Facts About Refrigerators & Freezers

Your refrigerator consumes about 20% of your household's annual energy costs. A freezer in the garage can add an additional 15%. By following the simple energy-saving tips in this brochure, you can keep your food and drinks cold longer for less.

## Keeping your appliances in good shape

Follow these simple tips to keep your refrigerator and freezer operating efficiently in good working condition.

### Clean the coils

Dirt collecting on the coils can result in higher operating costs. Check and clean them at least twice a year. You'll find them on the back or bottom front of your appliance. Consult your owner's manual for maintenance and safety instructions.

### Check the temperature

Your refrigerator's temperature should be set between 38°F and 40°F. Your freezer should be set at 0°F.

### Check the door seals

Check the seals on your doors. If they're cracked or you feel cold air leaking out, they should be replaced. An easy way to check them is to place a flashlight inside and close the door. If you can see light with the door closed, replace the seal. Then once you've changed them, keep them clean so they seal properly.

### Test the balance

If your refrigerator or freezer isn't level, the door may not seal properly allowing cold air to leak out. A quick way to test the balance is to set a glass of water on top of your appliance. Then, simply adjust the legs until the water is level. Consult your owner's manual for maintenance and safety instructions.

### Open only when necessary

Opening the refrigerator or freezer door only when necessary will reduce the amount of cold air lost. When loading groceries or leftovers, set all perishable foods aside and stock your refrigerator or freezer at one time instead of repeatedly opening and closing the door.



### Turn off the anti-sweat switch

Your refrigerator uses less energy if you turn off the anti-sweat heater switch. These switches prevent moisture build-up on the outside and can generally be turned off in most parts of San Diego County (areas of low humidity).

### Don't overload

Try not to overload the capacity of your refrigerator or freezer. Refer to your owner's manual for correct capacity. Also, adding a large quantity of unfrozen food to your freezer over several days will not allow it to quick-freeze your food. Here's a hint for efficiently freezing food: About two to three pounds of food for every cubic foot of your freezer will freeze within a 24-hour period.

### Check the location

Place your refrigerator or freezer in a dry, cool and well-ventilated area. Be sure to keep them away from heat sources like ovens, stoves, hot water heaters and clothes dryers.

### Vacation tips

When leaving town for a few days, here are some things to consider:

- Remove foods from your refrigerator that are likely to spoil, like leftovers and dairy products. There's no need to cool something you're going to throw away anyway.

- You don't need to unplug your refrigerator or freezer or even adjust the thermostats. It's just not cost-effective. Some refrigerators, particularly older models, may have difficulty restarting. So if you have an older model, be sure to consider this before unplugging it.
- If you're away for four weeks or more, consider cleaning out your refrigerator, unplugging it and leaving the doors open. *If there is a chance that children or pets might be around while you're gone, be extremely careful. Some older refrigerators and freezers are impossible to open from the inside should someone get trapped inside.*

### Keep it closed when the lights go out

If your power goes out for 24 hours or less, keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. This will help foods stay cold. If your service is interrupted for longer than a day, consider buying some dry ice (two lbs. for every cubic foot of freezer space) and placing it in your freezer. This will help to keep your food frozen for two to four days. Please wear gloves when handling the dry ice to protect your hands from dry ice burns. After your power comes back on, check the condition of your food. If you feel it is unsafe, you should dispose of it.

### Replace older models

Older refrigerators and freezers can use up to twice as much energy as new models of the same size. So, you may want to consider replacing your old model with a newer, more efficient model.

### Making the right choice on a new model

When shopping for a new refrigerator or freezer, be sure to compare the appliance's annual energy use as well as the purchase price. You can find the annual energy use scale on the yellow and black EnergyGuide label on the front of new models. The further the arrow is to the left, the less the appliance costs to use.

New refrigerators and freezers also have many features that can affect operating costs. Also, look for models with the ENERGY STAR® label—they meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set

by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and cost less to operate than standard models (see following chart).

**19-year old: \$288 per year**  
**ENERGY STAR® qualified: \$91 per year**  
**Annual Savings: \$197 per year\***

\* Your actual savings will vary depending upon the size, model, style and energy efficiency level of the refrigerator or freezer that you buy. Operating costs are based on 15 cents per kWh. Actual price may vary based on market prices, your tiered rate, and other factors.

To select the model that's right for you, be sure to consider your family's size and its needs along with the following tips:

### Refrigerators

- Automatic defrost units will prevent frost build-up in both the freezer and refrigerator.
- Through-the-door water and ice dispensers stop cold air loss by reducing the number of times the doors are opened and closed.

### Stand-alone freezers

- Two basic types of freezers are available—chest and upright models. Chest models lose less cold air when opening the door and usually hold more food than an upright model of the same capacity. On the other hand, upright models generally offer easier access and require less floor space.
- Manual defrost units are cheaper to run than automatic defrost units as long as you defrost regularly and keep the frost build-up to less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. Otherwise, they may actually cost you more to run.

No matter what features you select, you should generally allow six cubic feet of freezer space for each person in your household.

### For more information

SDG&E is committed to providing safe, reliable energy and exceptional customer service. If you'd like more energy-saving information, contact SDG&E at **1-800-411-SDGE (7343)** or by e-mail at [info@sdge.com](mailto:info@sdge.com). You can also visit our Web site at [www.sdge.com](http://www.sdge.com).



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