

# Take Control & Save<sup>®</sup>

A Cooperative Effort for Energy Efficiency

[www.TakeControlAndSave.coop](http://www.TakeControlAndSave.coop)

## Energy-Saving Residential Refrigeration

### Keys to kitchen efficiency

Making your kitchen more energy-efficient requires a careful look at all the appliances you use to store food, keep it fresh, and prepare it for meals. Even though you can take steps to make *most* of your appliances more efficient, the single *biggest* energy-consuming appliance in most kitchens is the refrigerator.<sup>1</sup>

To increase energy efficiency, you might consider replacing an older refrigerator with a new ENERGY STAR-qualified model, which by definition must be at least 20% more efficient than the federal minimum energy standard. ENERGY STAR is a government program designed to help protect the environment by promoting energy efficiency. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), which administrate the program, estimate that replacing a refrigerator bought in 1990 with a new ENERGY STAR-qualified model would save enough energy to light the average household for nearly four months.<sup>2</sup>



### Ways to start saving now

Whether with a standard unit or an ENERGY STAR-qualified model, you can decrease energy use for your refrigerator or freezer by taking a few simple steps:

- Keep the refrigerator away from sources of heat, including the oven, dishwasher, or direct sunlight.
- Leave enough space between the wall or cabinets and the refrigerator or freezer to allow air to circulate around the condenser coils.
- Clean coils regularly. Just unplug the appliance, remove the trim plate, and use a long, narrow vacuum-cleaner nozzle or coil brush to clean gently around the coils, removing dust and debris. Replace the trim plate or cover and then plug the cord back in.<sup>3</sup>
- Check door seals to be sure they're airtight.
- Buy a small refrigerator thermometer and adjust the temperature between 35°F and 38°F. Set your freezer's temperature at 0°F.
- Minimize the amount of time the refrigerator door is open.
- Recycle an older or "second" refrigerator, especially if it's not being used efficiently (e.g., located in an unconditioned space such as a garage, not being kept full, not being defrosted, etc.). Details on how to recycle old refrigerators are listed on the reverse of this page.



<sup>1,2</sup>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Energy [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=refrig\\_pr\\_refrigerators](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=refrig_pr_refrigerators)  
<sup>3</sup>Dave Vandevort's Home Tips [www.hometips.com/diy-how-to/refrigerator-coils-cleaning.html](http://www.hometips.com/diy-how-to/refrigerator-coils-cleaning.html)

## How to shop for an efficient refrigerator or freezer

The easiest way to be sure you're buying an energy-efficient refrigerator or freezer is to ask for an ENERGY STAR-qualified model. Here are some more ways you can determine the best energy-efficient appliances for your home:

- Check the EnergyGuide label. This is a yellow sticker attached to the appliance showing how much energy it uses, how its efficiency compares to similar models, and approximately how much it would cost to operate it on an annual basis.
- Get the right size. In most cases, bigger models use more energy; refrigerators of 16-20 cubic feet are usually most efficient, and chest freezers typically use less energy than other configurations.
- Look at top-freezer refrigerators, which use 10-25% less energy than side-by-sides.
- Forego the ice-maker and dispenser, which increase energy use by 14-20% and can cost an extra \$75-250 at the time of purchase.
- Select a model with automatic moisture control, which prevents moisture from building up on the outside of the appliance without using a heater. ("Anti-sweat" heaters actually use 5-10% more energy than other models.)
- Consider a manual-defrost model, which uses about half as much energy as an automatic-defrost model. But remember, manual-defrost refrigerators won't save energy unless they are defrosted whenever frost build-up approaches one-quarter of an inch.<sup>4</sup>



## Recycle your old fridge

As part of the ENERGY STAR program, the DOE has created a campaign to help you get rid of your old refrigerators, lower your energy bills, and help protect the environment by recycling those obsolete appliances. It's called "Make A Cool Change: Recycle Your Old Fridge (Or Freezer)," and it's a big project. More than 47 million refrigerators more than ten years old are estimated to be in use in the U.S.—and all of these older models are using more energy than necessary to do the job. The DOE encourages anyone who owns an old refrigerator or freezer to participate in this unique recycling program, which can even help save money when you buy a new ENERGY STAR-qualified model.

Details are available at [RecycleMyOldFridge.com](http://RecycleMyOldFridge.com), or at [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=refrig.pr\\_refrigerators](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=refrig.pr_refrigerators).

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Energy [http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=refrig.pr\\_tips\\_refrigerators](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=refrig.pr_tips_refrigerators)

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