

Refrigeration Preventative Maintenance



Don't get caught up in the "If it isn't broken, why fix it?" mentality!

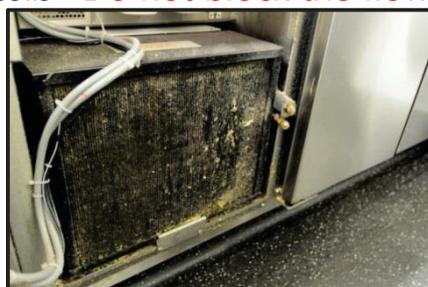
Refrigeration and freezer preventative maintenance

While there is not a lot of real practical preventative maintenance protocol on many appliances, you can prevent some major problems, inconveniences, and greatly enhance or extend the life of your equipment through regular minor services.

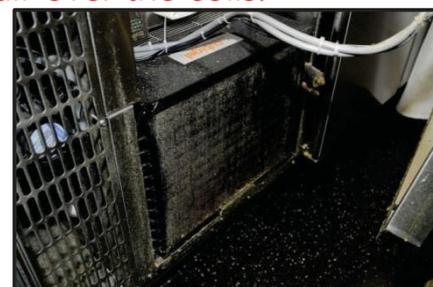
The most important thing you can do to prevent future problems with your refrigerators and freezers is to ensure good air flow over the coils - **Do not block the flow of air over the coils.**



Preparation / Make up fridge



Blocked condenser coil



Cleaned coil

Some units may draw air through the front grill, and release air from the back of the machine; others may exit through the side. Wherever the air is released, it is important that the hot air does not recycle back into the cooling fan. This can be achieved by:

Monthly maintenance by store owner

1. Clean condensers – This can be achieved by using a vacuum cleaner with a brush on or if need be use a separate hand brush. Watch for sharp metal edges and operating motors. Gloves should be worn.



Dust after only 3 months



5 minutes of cleaning



A cleaned condenser



Ready to go

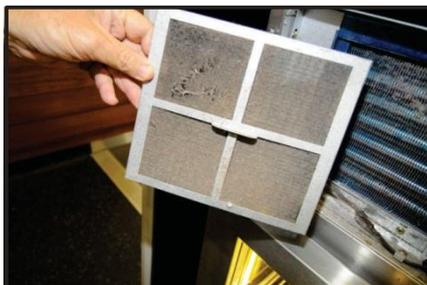
2. [Check flow of air](#)
3. [Check thermostat calibration](#) - this can be done by checking your product temperature and comparing it with the reading on your thermostat. Just take note to record a product that has been in the cabinet for sometime.
4. [Clean filters](#) – This is best done by washing them in warm soapy water to ensure any grease residue is removed. Washing them in water will also help prolong the life of the filter as brushing them clean is harsh on the filter material. Ensure filters are dry before re-installing them.



Filter on milk fridge



Clean condenser coil behind filter

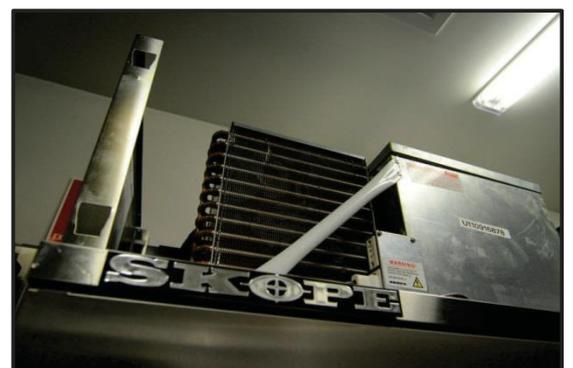
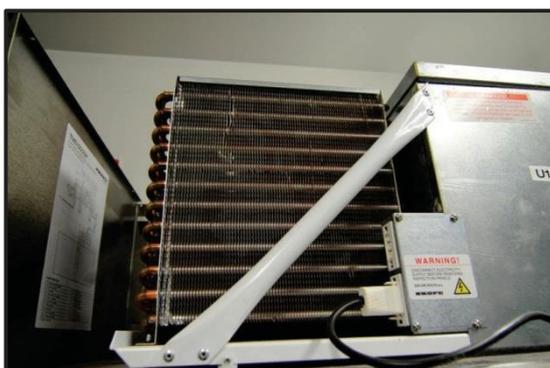


Blocked filter



Cleaned and ready to go back in

5. [Visual inspection of all equipment \(is it safe?\)](#)



Check the condenser coils are clean

6. Clean out drain – Check to see if the cabinet has a removable drain shive at the entry point. If so, remove the and give it a wash. Then slowly pour ½ cup of warm water down the drain and ensure it flows freely. Replace the drain shive.

These 6 simple procedures may save you that break down call in the middle of a rush period during your busiest day of the week!

Why should you maintain your equipment?

Preventative maintenance saves time!

Preventative maintenance procedures are quite simple compared to troubleshooting and repair procedures.

Preventative maintenance plans save you money!

How can spending money every month cost me less in the long run?

Avoiding problems will save you money compared to paying for new parts or related repair jobs or worse... a new fridge.

Take your car as an example. Most people don't wait for it to completely break down before seeing what is wrong. Generally you would get it serviced once a year to ensure it stays in working order and you can identify any issues in the early stages. This is one of the most important aspects of preventative maintenance! If your service technician can see a problem developing, they can usually fix it immediately, or propose a solution on the spot. This will save you endless amounts of stress, worrying about time restrictions, or alternate refrigeration options during an emergency call-out, as well as hoping a technician is available at the time of your request.

These tasks can usually be performed for a fraction of the cost of a service call out.

Preventative maintenance helps safeguard your "food safety"

Regular maintenance checks ensure that your refrigeration is running at the correct temperature, meeting all food safety standards, and not allowing for any discrepancies or questions.

Preventative maintenance helps improve performance

The performance of your refrigeration system will degrade over time and is inevitable. It all comes down to how you treat your appliances as to when problems start to occur. Preventative maintenance will help to improve the life span of your refrigeration equipment and minimise that decline for as long as possible.

So if you notice anything, as insignificant as it may seem at the time, give a service agent a call and they will help you identify the issues in question. Past experiences have taught me that problems caught early are usually cheap to fix, but if you wait too long you may have a major expense on your hands.

Preventative Maintenance Checklist

Scheduled cleaning and preventative maintenance on critical kitchen equipment will minimise utility consumption, prolong the equipment's lifespan and provide optimum performance.

Most commercial refrigeration manufacturers have routine maintenance programs in which you can enroll to have a trained professional assess your refrigeration equipment. Their expertise will help identify potential problems before they result in costly repairs and refrigerator downtime.

General things to avoid

- Hosing down equipment
- Neglecting filter changes
- Improper application or use
- Operating equipment with frayed, burnt power cords or exposed wiring
- Operating equipment without knowing proper procedures
- Use only as outlined in owner's manual – it's there for a reason
- Do not use any steel wool, caustic cleaning chemicals, or bleach when cleaning the interior of your refrigerated unit. These products can not only cause damage to the finish of the refrigerator, but they can leave behind strong chemical scents that can affect the flavor of the food. Use a solvent comprised of warm water and mild soap, to clean the inside of your refrigeration unit.

General things to look for

- Are hinges, handles, knobs, grills etc. all in good condition?
- Are motor's noisy or don't turn off?
- Are the filters clean?
- Are the interior lights in the fridge working correctly?

Having functioning interior lights will allow employees to quickly identify what they are seeking and reduce the amount of time the door stays open. When replacing the lights, be sure to use the same size and wattage of the bulb already as was previously installed. Lower wattage bulbs may not be illuminated properly in the cold temperature and could damage the housing.

- Are temperatures within range the desired setting?
In order to assure proper food safety, the holding temperature on all commercial refrigeration equipment needs to be checked several times every day. If the temperature is too high, the food can spoil. If the holding temperature is too low, it could be caused by blocked vents or a malfunction with the refrigeration system. Ensure air delivery and return air grilles are clear from product preventing the refrigerated air from circulating within the cabinet and preventing the cabinet from obtaining its correct operating temperature.
- Are door gaskets sealed properly, or is there any wearing or tearing?
In order to assure the door or drawer is properly sealed, insert a dollar bill between the gasket and door frame and close the door. The bill should give some resistance when you pull on it. If it falls to the floor or slides out easily, the door is not properly sealing, and you need to replace the gasket. Once a week, clean door gaskets and shelves with a soap and water mixture. Remember to check that the gaskets still create a proper seal once you have reattached them to the refrigeration unit.

When the technician diagnoses your equipment, take a couple of minutes to be shown the problem and the cause. This will help you to understand the reasons behind any problems, hopefully lowering the possibility of it occurring again.

Equipment checklist

- q Maintain daily temperature logs (open-shift & close-shift)
- q Observe unusual patterns
- q Allow scheduling service prior to product emergencies
- q Keep evaporator coils (cold air) and condenser coils (warm air) clean
- q Never block airflow to fans
- q Never place un-refrigerated or heated products in "designed for storage" equipment
- q Use ice baths or blast chillers to freeze product
- q Do not overfill storage bins with product
- q Air should move freely around all items especially sides and bottom
- q Bins should never be greater than 2/3 full
- q Prior to placing a service call, check for obvious signs such as making sure that the power is on, or observing a temperature pattern for one hour to avoid false alarms, (check resets)
- q All evaporation coils should be free of ice by visual inspection at all times
- q All door gaskets should be sealed from outside air completely, gaps will have a large impact on performance
- q Cold pans should sit in place with no bent corners



Ensure there is room for cool air to circulate around the product



Do not overfill stainless steel trays