

Garage Refrigerator



Equipment Description

Since garage or basement refrigerators are often old kitchen refrigerators that are currently being used for extra storage, they are typically partially full and may not have any frozen foods, but may store ice cubes for entertaining events.

Loss Scenario

Garage or basement refrigerators usually are poorly maintained. Dirt and dust accumulate on the heat exchange coils under or behind the refrigerator. This can cause short cycling and overheating of the compressor unit, which may result in compressor failure.

Refrigerators with freezers that are located in areas subject to freezing temperatures, such as in an unheated garage, may reach appropriate temperatures in the refrigerator section without having to turn on the freezer compressor unit. This results in adequate temperatures for items in the refrigerator section, but temperatures in the freezer may not be cold enough to keep food and ice frozen.

Size and Carbon Footprint

These older machines have low efficiencies and have an estimated annual electricity use of 1,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) a year which equates to approximately 1,520 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂). This occasionally used appliance can consume twice the energy of your more modern kitchen refrigerator.

Maintenance Tips

- Unplug these machines when not in use and remove the door or lock it open. This will save electricity and reduce chances of mold and mildew.
- Keep the heat exchange coils clean. Remove dust with a light brush and grime with soft dampened cloth. This will improve cooling capability and reduce operating costs as well as reduce the chances of a compressor failure.
- Check the door seals by sliding a piece of paper in the door. If the paper falls, it means the door seals are not functioning properly and should be replaced to avoid wasting energy.
- To remove mold and mildew, clean the interior surfaces with white vinegar and wipe dry.

Loss Prevention Tips

- If your garage refrigerator is idle and unplugged, make sure to plug it in periodically for a two hour duration or longer to keep refrigeration seals from drying out and failing.
- If your garage refrigerator is running but not kept full, consider replacing it with a smaller Energy Star refrigerator that can be kept full.
- In the event of a power failure, do not open the refrigerator or freezer unless absolutely necessary. This will preserve the cool temperatures as long as possible and minimize potential food spoilage. Remember that a refrigerator in a garage in the summer may get warm inside much faster than a refrigerator in your kitchen. During the cold winter, the garage refrigerator may remain cooler longer than the kitchen refrigerator during a similar power outage.