

Water Heating and Refrigeration for Small Businesses

Water Heating

- Almost all small businesses use at least some hot water, and it can account for 25% or more of energy costs for those that use it for business purposes (such as dishwashing and laundry).
- If your water heater was installed before 1990, it is most likely not insulated as effectively as it could be. Insulate your water heater's tank to reduce heat loss and save energy. (Be careful not to cover the water heater's top, bottom, burner compartment, or thermostat.)
- Make sure your heater's temperature is set no higher than 120 degrees (which is hot enough for nearly all commercial uses). To test the water heater's temperature, turn on the hot water in the faucet nearest the heater. Let it run for 2 minutes into a glass. Then measure the temperature of the water in the glass with a meat thermometer. If the temperature is above 120, turn the water heater down a little bit. Repeat the process the next day until the hot water temperature is below 120.
- Don't heat water when you don't have to. Use a programmable thermostat (most cost about \$30) to turn off your water heater at night and on the weekends and turn it back on an hour or so before you open for business in the morning.
- Choose an energy-efficient ENERGY STAR water heater when it's time to replace your current one. While it may cost more upfront, the cost savings from reduced energy usage over the heater's lifetime will more than make up the initial price difference.



Refrigeration

- Even if the only refrigerator at your business is in the break room, running it accounts for a substantial share of your total energy bill, and if you operate a convenience store, restaurant or similar business, that share is much higher.
- Clean your refrigerator's condenser coils at least once a year. Dirt and dust accumulation on the coils causes the refrigerator to unnecessarily run for longer periods of time.
- Check the seals on your refrigerator's doors to make sure they are airtight. Air leakage means you're losing the cold air you pay for. Test the seal by closing the door over a piece of paper so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper out easily, it may make sense to replace the seal or adjust the door latch.
- Choose an energy-efficient model when replacing an old refrigerator or buying a new one. (Look for the ENERGY STAR label.) A typical new refrigerator unit uses less than half the energy of one that is 20 years old.

