

Commercial refrigeration efforts move forward

CEE develops a draft spec for reach-ins and ice-makers

CEE has developed draft specifications for solid-door, reach-in refrigerators and freezers as well as ice-makers. The goal is to finalize the specification in time for members to use in their 2003 programs.

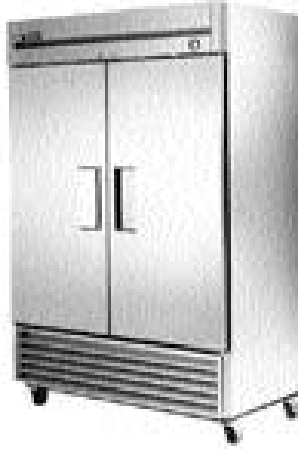
"This is low-hanging fruit," said CEE Program Associate Rachael Shwom, who is coordinating this effort. "There is an easy 20 percent savings available for these products with very little, if any, incremental cost."

CEE's Tier 1 draft specification for reach-ins is based on ENERGY STAR® performance levels established in the fall of 2001. It includes only solid-door models (glass door "beverage merchandisers" are excluded). The draft Tier 1 ice-maker spec utilizes guidelines recommended by the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP).

ACEEE has been extremely helpful in this area, having generated a substantial amount of research. According to ACEEE Executive Director Steve Nadel, preliminary data on 80 products indicate that high-efficiency models may have little or no added cost, and in some cases are less expensive than standard units.

The main barrier to sales of these efficient products appears to be the complexity and fragmentation of the market. Users of this equipment include restaurants, hotels, hospitals and other institutional buildings. First cost and brand loyalty may also be major factors, with most purchasers unaware of their energy-efficiency opportunities.

"We have limited understanding of this market," said ENERGY STAR Marketing Manager Kate Lewis. "We're reach-



ing out to dealers, specifiers and distributors as well as large end-users. We need to understand the channels of distribution and who the influencers are. About 80 percent of the market for reach-in refrigerators is first-cost driven and results in purchases of standard-efficiency models."

Restaurants make up 80 percent of the market for reach-in refrigerators and freezers.

Energy savings of up to 50 percent (compared to minimum-standard equipment) are currently available.

Ice-making products fall into three distinct categories: ice-making heads, self-contained units and remote condensing units. CEE has developed draft specifications for each of these categories, with savings opportunities of 15-20 percent (compared to minimum standards) easily attainable.

For water-cooled models, CEE has included a water specification.

"This would discourage manufacturers from producing models that achieve efficiency gains by using excessive amounts of water," explained Shwom. "All remote condensing ice-makers are air-cooled so there is no need for a water consumption component."

CEE has contacted manufacturers for comments on the reach-in refrigerator and freezer specifications. A similar outreach involving ice-makers will take place in the near future. Market research is also ongoing.

"This information should help improve the effectiveness of member program designs," said CEE Deputy Director for Programs Ed Wisniewski.

For further information about CEE's efforts in the above commercial refrigeration projects, contact Rachael Shwom at rshwom@cee1.org or 617-589-3949, ext. 228.