

CHEFS TOYS

Commercial Kitchen Design & Supply™

Reach-In Refrigerator and Freezer Buying Guide

Choosing the right commercial reach-in refrigerator or freezer for your restaurant is a very important part of making sure your kitchen runs smoothly. There are more options than you probably realize for your business, but we at Chefs' Toys want to offer you tips and advice so you feel confident that your commercial refrigerator or freezer is the perfect model for your business. In a hurry? Just contact us! One of our foodservice professionals will be happy to assist.

Why does Compressor location matter?

Commercial Reach-In Refrigerators and Freezers come in two different styles, top mounted compressors and bottom mounted compressors. There are positives to both so which is best for your application really depends on the environment in which your business will operate and your personal preference.

- **Top Mounted Condenser / Compressor Assembly**

Warm air rises which means that when the compressor is installed on top of the refrigerator or freezer it is going to pull in warmer air, which will cause the compressor to work harder. Also, it is more difficult to clean the condenser assembly on these units when it is located on top (a ladder will be required). These are excellent choices where power hoses are used to wash the floors or for refrigerated/frozen pet food where animal fur can easily plug bottom mounted condensers.

- **Bottom Mounted Condenser / Compressor Assembly**

These models pull in slightly cooler air near the floor that keeps the compressor from having to work quite as hard. Also, since the condenser assembly is located at the bottom of the unit, the bottom shelf is elevated off the ground, making it easier to reach product on the bottom shelf. It is important that you clean your condenser coils more often with bottom mounted condenser/compressor assemblies because it is easier for them to clog with dust and grease from the floor. This is also offset by the fact that it is somewhat easier to clean your compressor because it is lower to the ground (no ladder required). You can also use the top of the external cabinet for storage (you cannot place any items on the top of a top mounted refrigeration condenser/compressor assembly unit).

What Style of Doors do I need?

- **Solid Doors**

Solid swing doors are the most common design for a commercial refrigerator or freezer. They are easy to clean and give you quick access to everything inside the unit. The swing door can block the flow of traffic in your kitchen so pay close attention to where the unit is located (aisle clearance) and how people will use it. On single door units, there are often custom left-handed versions available for applications where this would be advantageous.

- **Glass Doors**

Glass door refrigerators and freezers are less energy efficient and more difficult to clean; however, this is offset by the ability to see the product before you open the door. Whether

used in kitchens or in places where customers can see the product, the ability to display the product keeps you from having to open the door and leave it open while you search for the product you need.

- **Half Doors**

If you're looking for a more efficient door, half doors allow you to only open one smaller section of your refrigerator or freezer at a time. This helps keep temperatures inside the unit consistent for a longer period of time.

- **Sliding Doors**

Sliding Doors are a convenient solution for narrow spaces where swing doors may be difficult to open or block traffic through the kitchen. Only one door can be opened at a time with these units.

- **Pass Through Doors**

Available in both full and half door options with combinations of glass and solid doors, pass through commercial refrigerators and freezers are perfect for applications where the kitchen is separated from the prep or service areas. These refrigerators and freezers allow the kitchen staff to load products through the rear of the units, such as prepared and plated foods and desserts, while still having access to the products from the front of the units.

Features to Consider

- **Removable Gaskets**

There are rubber gaskets that line the interior of the door frames on your refrigerator and freezer to keep the cold sealed in. Even though they should only be cleaned with soap and water (no stainless cleaners or solvents), these gaskets will eventually wear down and need to be replaced. Many commercial refrigerators and freezers feature gaskets that can be easily removed and replaced allowing your refrigerator or freezer to continue operating properly. Here are some signs that you should replace your gaskets.

- Frost begins building up on the shelves of your freezer
- You experience temperature fluctuations
- You can feel cold air leaking from the refrigerator
- Visible cracks on the gasket
- The gasket is hardening or is constantly compressed
- The gasket begins pulling away from the equipment.

- **Digital Thermostats**

Digital thermostats provide more accurate readouts that make it easy for you to monitor the internal temperature of your commercial refrigerator or freezer. New refrigerators and freezers with digital thermostats are often more efficient and therefore may save you on service, maintenance, and utility expenses.

- **Casters and Legs**

Including casters on your commercial refrigerator or freezer makes it easy to move and clean under your unit. Casters feature locking mechanisms so that you don't have to worry about the unit moving while in use.

Specification Line Refrigeration

Some manufacturers offer a higher-end design of their commercial refrigerators and freezers that they refer to as their "Spec Line". These units often feature more interior and exterior customization, more advanced temperature controls, and other subtle design or construction upgrades. All standard commercial refrigerators and freezers are built with heavy use in the foodservice market in

mind. However, these "Spec Line" models may feature some sophisticated characteristics which may be advantageous for your application.

See all Reach-In Refrigerators [here](#).

See all Reach-In Freezers [here](#).

Need help? One of our Foodservice Professionals would be happy to assist. Please call us at (714) 665-CHEF (2433) or email us at CustomerSupport@chefstoys.com.