

CHEFS TOYS

Commercial Kitchen Design & Supply™

Ice Machines Buying Guide

So you are interested in buying a new Ice Machine. This Ice Maker buying guide was created to help foodservice and bar professionals understand the key considerations. In a rush? Now worries. Just contact us and we are happy to help.

Replacing your Ice Maker?

If you are replacing your ice maker this is a great opportunity to evaluate your ice machine and determine whether the unit you have been using is really the right fit for your business.

Here are a few questions you should ask yourself and discuss with a member of the Chefs' Toys team.

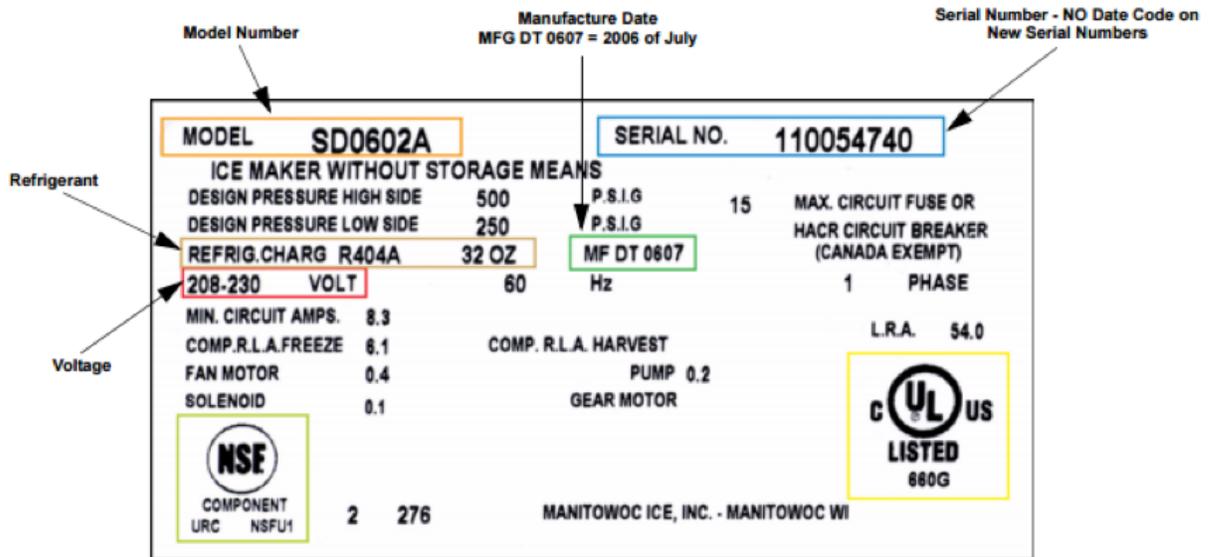
- **Did your prior Ice Machine produce enough Ice?**
You never want to run out of ice so it is important when replacing your ice machine that your new machine is able to keep up with your needs. You want your ice machine to produce enough ice to service your business during the peak periods and you'll want to take into account how your business is growing so that your ice maker will continue to service your business for years to come.
- **Is the size and shape of the ice sufficient?**
There are a number of different types of ice and when you are buying a new ice machine it is a perfect opportunity to make sure that you are using the best kind of ice for your application. You might not be using the most efficient type of ice or there may be other kinds of ice that would increase customer satisfaction in your business. If you aren't sure check out our description of the different kinds of ice below.
- **Can you reuse your Ice Bin?**
If the bin on your ice machine is still in good condition you may be able to reuse it. Make sure to check your bin for any cracks or damage that may require you to replace the bin. If you can reuse your bin our staff can help you find the right ice maker to fit your bin. If you do choose to keep your bin be sure to let your Chef's Toys team member know how large it is when you buy your new ice machine. You want to make sure that your bin is large enough to handle the production rate of your new ice maker, especially if you end up choosing to increase the size of your ice maker. Try finding the model number of the bin, but if you cannot locate it, make sure to measure the width and depth of the top of the bin so we can properly match the ice machine head.
- **Do you use a Water Filter?**
If you aren't filtering your water this is a good opportunity to install a filtration system with your new ice machine to help ensure the highest quality product and to extend the life of your new ice maker. Be sure to mention this to a member of the Chef's Toys team when discussing production levels because if you haven't been filtering your water it is possible that your old ice maker wasn't operating at peak levels which would cause it not to service your daily needs the way that it should.

Bring us a Picture

Our customer service team is here to help in whatever way they can so feel free to take a picture of your ice machine and bring it with you into the store and we'll identify which model you have. Our knowledgeable staff will work with you to decide what the best ice maker is for your application. It's best if you can get a photo of the serial plate on your ice machine.

- **Where is my Serial Plate?**

Ice-O-Matic – check on the rear of the ice machine on the right hand side. On Modular heads you can also remove the front panel (two screws on each side) and the secondary serial plate will be visible, depending on the model of the ice maker, in the front of the unit. For undercounters, you can remove the front grill to access the secondary serial plate. Fill in detail. Include a sample picture or drawing. Scotsman – Model and serial numbers are on the back of all Scotsman ice machines and on certain models, may also be available behind the machine's front panel either in the lower right corner of the machine or on the sheet metal that separates the larger compartment from the smaller ice-making compartment. Manitowoc – Serial plates are located on the back of the ice machine.



Buying a New Ice Maker?

Ice machines come in many different shapes and sizes and their applications can vary. Our team here at Chef's Toys is experienced and knowledgeable about each type of ice machine to help you make the best choice for your business. Let's take a moment to review the choices you have so that you know you're getting exactly what you need to be successful.

Types of Ice Makers

- **Modular Ice Machines**

These ice makers are designed to sit on top of ice machine bins, beverage machines, or an ice machine dispenser. Modular ice machines are also known as the "factory" and commonly come in 22", 30", and 48" wide and produce between 250 to over 1000 lbs of ice per day.

- **Undercounter Ice Machines**

Intended for lower volume spaces like bars or cafes, undercounter ice machines are self-contained units that produce and store ice. By combining the ice maker and the ice bin these machines can fit under a 40" counter to conveniently keep a steady production of ice right where your staff needs it, eliminating the need for running buckets of ice around the restaurant. Smaller than a modular ice maker, undercounter ice machines generally only produce approximately 350 lbs of ice per day at the most.

- **Countertop Ice Dispensers**

These specialized ice machines combine the ice maker with a smaller bin intended for dispensing ice regularly for your customers. While still smaller than a modular ice maker these units can produce as much as 400 lbs of ice per day. Countertop ice dispensers are very common in the healthcare industry and commonly dispense easy to chew nugget ice.

Choosing your Type of Ice

You may not realize that not all ice is the same and even if you do you probably don't know what the differences are between each style of ice. The Chef's Toys team is passionate about ice and we want to apply all our knowledge and experience to help you pick the best type of ice for your application.

Let's walk you through the major types of ice so that you can make an informed decision.

- **Full Cube**

The quintessential cube of ice, full cube ice melts slowly and keeps drinks cold for a long time. This kind of ice is the most aesthetically appealing style of ice for cocktails because larger cubes feel nice in your glass—and they sound great, too! For large ice dispensers or other retail applications customers often prefer a solid full cube.

- **Half Cube**

While the full cube looks traditional the half cube is actually the most popular. This type of ice is so versatile that it can be used in nearly any application. Because of the way that these ice makers produce half cube ice this type of ice keeps cool the longest.

- **Nugget**

Known most for how soft and chewable it is, nugget ice is commonly used for soft drinks. While still denser than flake ice, nugget ice is great for iced tea, soft drinks, and water because your customers will love to chew the ice when they are done. The healthcare industry tends to use nugget ice in their beverages and ice dispensers as well because it's easier for their patients to chew on. Nugget ice has more nicknames than we can list but it's commonly known as pearl, cubelet or gem ice.

- **Flake**

The most common use of flaked ice—or "shaved ice"—is food displays like salad bars or meat cases because the ice is so easy to shape. This is a very energy efficient type of ice because it is so thin. This makes it ideal for blended drinks as well as for the healthcare industry where they worry about larger types of ice being a choking hazard for their patients.

- **Gourmet**

This is a specialty type of ice that is very new to the industry and it comes in various shapes. Gourmet ice is intended to be even larger than full cube ice and is an elegant choice for cooling drinking. Fine-dining restaurants and high-end bars choose this kind of ice for the aesthetic quality.

How much ice do you need?

When determining what level of production you need from your new ice machine there are a few variables that you need to consider.

If your business is new you'll want to predict approximately how much ice each customer will use for each meal and then predict how many customers you think your restaurant or business can service during peak hours.

What are your meal periods and how many days a week are you open? If you are only breakfast service your ice machine will have much more time to recover which will allow you to use a smaller ice maker.

Finally, if your business is growing, make sure to take this into account and look for an ice maker that will be able to scale along with your business.

Always measure based on your businesses periods because you want to ensure that no matter how crazy your day gets, your ice machine is always able to keep up with demand.

When you speak to a customer service representative at Chefs' Toys, get a sense for:

- The available width of your machine (how wide can it be?)
- Desired Ice Type
- Your application: foodservice, QSR, lodging etc
- Peak # of customers per day
- Peak # of cocktails per day
- Salad bar square footage

Knowing these factors will help choose the right ice machine.

Ice Machine Bin Sizing

An ice maker lets you hold ice until it's ready for use. When picking a bin to go with your modular ice machine, you'll want to take several points into consideration:

- Choose a bin / machine combination that's too large, and it could result in wasted ice, making the bin a breeding ground for bacteria and mold due to excess melt water.
- Choosing a small ice machine and bin combination might leave you running out of ice and taxing your machine as it struggles to keep up.
- Don't assume the bin has to match the capacity of your machine. If your restaurant is busiest on the weekend, for example, you might need 900 lbs. of ice, but not nearly that much during the week. Pairing a small ice machine with a large bin will ensure you don't over-produce during the week, and that you'll still accumulate enough ice to handle the weekend rush.

Why use a Water Filter?

Using a commercial water filter system with your restaurant's ice maker doesn't just increase your customers' satisfaction, it also prolongs the life of your ice maker. A water filter removes small particles and reduces the number of minerals present in the water. Without filtering your water this can cause buildup inside your ice machine which will reduce the quality and production of your ice machine and could shorten its life span.

- Improves the taste of drinks
- Maintains higher ice production
- Maintains energy efficiency of the ice maker
- Lowers ice maker maintenance costs and prolongs the life of the machine

It is very important that your feed water be clean because your warranty will be void if the ice machine fails because of poor quality feed water.

Make sure to ask our team members about water filters when you buy a new ice machine. They will help make sure that your water filtration system is powerful enough for the ice machine you are using.

Keeping your Ice Machine Clean and your Ice Healthy

Taste of ice can certainly be impacted if an ice maker is not sanitized. And food safety factors are increasingly important. Ice is consumed and therefore the machine that creates it needs to be periodically cleaned and sanitized. Several devices on the market attempt to reduce mold, mildew, and other microbials. Some brands offer interesting new technology to facilitate this, for example.

Ice-O-Matic offers ozone sanitizing technology that significantly reduces bacteria growth throughout the entire ice path, from ice machine to bin or dispenser. Ozone (O₃) is very effective against bacteria and mold (better than chlorine, and Ozone eliminates taste and odor.) Instead of using light bulbs or air to distribute the Ozone, O₃-Matic™ uses water. The same water that goes into the ice cube. Why is that important? Because not only are you sanitizing the ice machine more effectively, but the ice delivers Ozone to the bin or dispenser keeping them clean as well. O₃-Matic™ reduces costly cleaning and sanitizing intervals. So if you want to improve the cleanliness of your ice machine consider O₃-Matic™ from Ice-O-Matic.

Parts of an Ice Maker

There are two major parts of an ice machine: the factory and the bin. The factory actually produces the ice and the bin stores that ice until it is needed. Modular ice machines contain only the factory and have to be installed either onto a bin or onto a beverage machine or ice dispenser that contains a bin. The more ice your business needs or the less recovery time between rushes that you have the higher the production rate of the factory you will need. Adapters can be purchased to allow you to mount smaller ice makers onto larger bins or you can even mount multiple small ice makers onto certain larger bins.

Types of Compressors

- **Air Cooled Ice Machines**

The most common type of ice machines, air cooled compressors are the most cost effective and energy efficient ice makers on the market. Many air cooled ice machines are Energy Star compliant so that you can keep your costs down. It's very important that you have 6" of clearance around the air intake and discharge areas of an air cooled ice maker in order to maintain their production rate and efficiency.

- **Water Cooled Ice Machines**

There are only a few reasons why water cooled ice machines are preferable. If you are installing the unit in a place where the ambient temperature is regularly going to be over 80 degrees Fahrenheit or where there is poor air circulation than a water cooled ice machine is your best choice because an air cooled unit will struggle to get the air cold enough. Similarly if you are installing your ice machine in a place where the air contains a high level

of contaminants you will want to choose a water cooled ice maker. Water cooled ice machines are less efficient and more costly than air cooled models so you should only choose water cooled units if one of these situations applies to you. If you are putting the unit in a place where it can get consistent, clean air circulation you should always choose an air cooled unit instead.

- **Remote Air-Cooled Ice Machines**

We all know that commercial kitchens get hot. When ice machines make ice they bring air in to cool the refrigeration and discharge the hot air. With standard air-cooled machines that means the ice machine adds to the heat in the kitchen or back room area. With these applications it is best to go with a Remote Air-Cooled Condenser and discharge the hot air outside. This option moves the “breathing” portion of the ice machine remotely, typically placed on the roof of a building. With this option you get all of the ice you need and none of the extra heat in the kitchen. This option requires the ice machine head, a remote condenser, and a line set that will connect the refrigeration system in the machine head to the remote condenser. Contact your Chef’s Toys representative for help with your remote air-cooled ice machine package.

Environmental Considerations and Rebates

We here at Chef’s Toys believe that it is our responsibility to be stewards of our environment which is why we promote and encourage you to choose energy saving ice machines for your business. By choosing the right ice machine for your business our team can help you conserve energy, lower your costs of running your ice machine, and reduce the contaminants in your ice.

Be sure to ask our Chef’s Toys customer service representatives about any rebates that may be available for your new ice machine.

Installation

There are a few items to make sure to consider when purchasing your ice machine. First, you must know where you will be locating your ice machine at your establishment. Be sure there is a water line, the proper electrical connections, and a floor drain within six feet of the location of the ice machine. Also, make sure to look at your selected ice machine’s specification sheet and note if there is any clearance needed around the ice machine head.

Top Ice Maker Brands



See all Ice Makers [here](#).

For help with your ice machine please contact us or email us at CustomerSupport@chefstoys.com