



REFRIGERATION FEATURE

HOTEL F&B – JULY 2015

Please attributes any quotes to Ray Hall, Managing Director, RH Hall

- ***What types of refrigeration are available to hotels?***

The range of refrigeration equipment available is vast and the options best suited depend on the type of operation and size of kitchen. Standard upright and under counter fridges and freezers offer basic but essential storage, with double door options available for larger sites. Chest freezers are also available for bulk storage needs. Refrigerated counters offer a solution for prep areas and are available with 2 to 4 doors and various drawer configuration options. More specialised equipment include blast chillers and freezers, meat or fish temperature options and bespoke cold rooms for sites requiring a larger chilled or frozen storage area.

- ***What should caterers consider before buying new refrigeration equipment?***

Look at your type of operation and consider the mix of fresh, chilled and frozen food served. The volume of meals being prepared and the kitchen throughput will help to identify the capacity of the unit required. Take into account the position of the units, back or front of house and also the space available in the kitchen. Check the warranty of the equipment – many products now offer a standard guarantee of up to 5 years.

- ***What steps can be taken to make sure refrigeration units don't fail?***

Refrigeration is the true workhorse of any kitchen and is relied upon 24/7. Vital in maintaining food safety, it is crucial to choose a leading brand with proven reliability and durability. The ambient operating temperature of the unit needs to be taken into account, some compressor units will not cope in very hot kitchen temperatures.

It is wise to have periodic service and maintenance in place; there are many service organisations that can provide this. Should the worst happen and a failure occurs, a product with a full on site guarantee and good spare part availability is essential. Look to buy from an established company with proven after sales service to ensure down time is kept to a minimum.

- ***Are there certain types or models that use less energy than others?***

Modern refrigeration products are usually very economical to run and products on the Energy Technology List – managed by The Carbon Trust – can be eligible for tax relief with the ECA (Enhanced Capital Allowance) scheme. Your supplier should be able to tell you which products are applicable along with comparable running cost. The well known established brands are generally more energy efficient compared to the lower priced imports.

- ***What are the pros and cons of using a number of free-standing units against one large walk-in unit?***

This really depends on the type of site and the space available. Chillier and Freezer rooms are a completely bespoke option, which can be provided in a variety of sizes with either integral compressors, or remote units. These bespoke options can be costly and a large investment for a limited temperature range.

Single upright or undercounted units are better suited where space is limited - narrow or shallow options are available - and for a variety of foods. Purchasing a single upright general storage fridge, separate meat fridge and freezer unit will probably work out at a fraction of the cost of a large bespoke cold room. That said if purchasing bulk foods then a walk in option would serve better if you have the required space.

- ***How can chefs maximise the use of their refrigeration units?***

Take a detailed look into your entire kitchen operation and plan out the kitchen area for the best workflow and of course required storage and prep area. Ensure your refrigeration units are sited correctly. Areas with a lower ambient temperature will ensure more efficient and reliable operation of the compressor.

Consider the choice and options available and call on specialist advice where available. Perhaps it's time to consider an entirely new kitchen layout?

Caterers that require extra prep space should look at refrigerated counter options, with a large choice available, also providing additional work top areas.

- ***If you could offer one tip to Hotel F&B managers deciding on their refrigeration choices, what would it be?***

Choose a leading brand, with an established reputation for good quality and reliability. This should ensure good spare parts availability and after sales service, with a good manufacturer's warranty. This offers peace of mind on one of the most important foodservice equipment items in a hotel kitchen.

- ***Please include a definitive website address where readers can go for more info on your company.***

www.rhhall.com

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