

## BUYING FREEZERS

Many families find that a freezer is a time saving convenience because it can reduce the number of shopping trips for food. There are three basic designs to choose from: chest, upright, or compact.

**Chest freezer:** A chest freezer opens from the top. It is more energy efficient and usually costs less to buy than an upright freezer of the same size. This type of freezer can store more food per cubic foot of freezer space compared to upright freezers, because there are no shelves. Packages can be placed in baskets that lift out to make it convenient to locate food. The capacity of a chest freezer ranges from 10 to 25 cubic feet of food storage space.

**Upright freezer:** The door opens from the front and looks similar to a refrigerator. One can choose between a left-opening and right-opening door. The shelves provide a good view of the contents and make it easy to find and remove packages of food. The capacity of this type of freezer ranges from 10-20 cubic feet. The upright requires less floor space than chest freezers.

**Compact freezer:** This type of freezer may have the greatest appeal to small families and to people with limited space. Both upright and chest designs are available. The food storage capacity is less than 10 cubic feet.

Consider the amount of space available for a freezer. It is best to place the freezer in a location away from sunlight and heat producing appliances such as furnaces, water heaters, ranges, and ovens.

Decide the capacity needed. One method to estimate the number of cubic feet needed for the freezer is to figure one to one and a half cubic feet per person eating at home. Each cubic foot of freezer space can hold about 35 pounds of food. This amount will vary for families who buy food in large quantities and/or freeze garden produce. In addition, some families will require additional freezer space if they cook and freeze foods for future use. If

the freezer is a replacement, decide if the size of the previous appliance was large enough to meet the family's food storage needs. For the most efficient use of energy dollars, keep the freezer at least two thirds full. The most popular size purchased is 15 cubic feet.

**Defrost features:** Most freezers are defrosted manually which requires 40% less electricity than the no-frost models. Some upright freezers have the no-frost system. Chest and compact freezers are manually defrosted. The manual defrost freezers are better at holding the temperature at one level for large amounts of food. Front drains are available on some models, which provide easy connection to hoses to release water during defrosting.

**Energy labels:** When shopping, read the energy guide labels on the freezers to find the most energy efficient appliance that best suits the needs of the family. Look for the lowest annual operating cost among freezers of similar size and defrost systems. The actual cost will vary according to the local energy cost, the amount of food stored in the freezer, the amount of frost built up in the freezer, the length of time the door is open while searching for food, and where the freezer is placed in the home.

**Warranty:** Freezers tend to come with a one-year warranty for parts and labor on the entire freezer and ten years on the sealed system. To prepare for repairs beyond the warranty, consider putting money in a savings account that would be equal to the amount the company would charge for an extended warranty on the freezer being purchased.

### Service Contracts

Service contracts, also known as extended warranties, are sold by many appliance dealers. Do not confuse the service contract with the manufacturer's warranty, which is automatically provided when you purchase the product. You must pay an additional fee for the service contract. Check to see exactly what

parts or services the contract covers, whether you will have to pay a deductible, where you must take the product to get service, and whether the service contract duplicates coverage already provided by the manufacturer's warranty.

#### Sources

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