

HOME WORK

Today's refrigerators don't compare to your grandmother's

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



JOE GAGNON

Many times I've complained that manufacturers of the modern refrigerator cannot provide us with cold temperatures equal to what my grandmother's refrigerator once did. He a l i h g a n c i o u s e d to recommend storage of leftover food for seven or eight days. Today they tell us to store food for no more than four days. Refrigerators once maintained temperatures of 34 degrees.

Today you are lucky to get bet. w 40 degrees. No wonder we have to be careful. Why can't refrigerator manufacturers get temperatures lower?

Food safety overlooked

According to a home food safety survey done in 1997 for the U.S. Department of Health, there were up to 6 million cases of foodborne illness in the United States - including more than 9,000 deaths. That's a wake-up call to all producers of food handling and refrigeration equipment. Some of these illnesses are directly attributable to foods not kept cold enough in storage.

What does it take to bring these facts into the minds of homeowners? I firmly believe

that we are not educated enough by the media in regards to potential food safety issues.

Auditors categorized kitchen violations as minor, major or critical. A critical violation can potentially lead to foodborne illness by itself. Major violations, though on their own are unlikely to cause foodborne illness, are frequently cited as contributing factors. To be considered acceptable, homes could have no more than four major violations and no critical violations.

Of the 106 households surveyed, cross-contamination occurred in 76 percent of kitchens, neglected hand washing occurred in 57 percent, and improper cooling of leftovers occurred in 29 percent of households with an average of almost

three per home. Major violations were observed, such as foods stored without covers or were improperly thawed. Kitchen cooks who smoked while preparing food also were observed. In the end, only one house received an acceptable rating. None rated excellent.

Maintaining it

The person in your home knows how well they prepare for a safe meal, but do they know what the temperature is in the refrigerator section. Very few of you can tell me what the temperature is inside the pickle jar sitting on that shelf. Is it important? You bet it is.

Take care of the refrigerator maintenance and you will have a more efficient unit. Have you

cleaned the condenser coil under the refrigerator lately? Only when it is cleaned can you get the maximum cold temperatures in a refrigerator. Are the doors sealing good and tight? When did you last check them out?

I'm sorry folks, I can't come over to your house and check out how you prepare a meal. I can write a column that I hope will make you understand how important the temperature is in the refrigerator. I can continue to meet with the concerned members of National Sanitation Foundation in their endeavors to get manufacturers to redesign their products to make them colder.

The stamps of approval from testing laboratories are very important to all of us as a con-

suming public. We all know how important properly operating restaurant equipment can be to good health. From the studies already done, it is proven that most of them are safer than some homes in regards to food preparations. Please think of your refrigerator this summer and keep it running cool. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard on Newstalk 760, WJRA-AM, every Saturday and Sunday mornings. He is a past president of The Society of Consumer Professionals. His second book, "The Words and Wisdom of The Appliance Doctor" is available in book stores. His phone number is (313) 873-9769.

Check jambs when replacing your old door

ASK DAD



HARRY JACHYM

My wife and I learned a valuable lesson: Don't leave home without your house key, even if someone is home.

When we left the house, our kids were home. Normally my house key is with my car keys, but we took Karen's car. She thought I had my house key and I assumed she had hers. (You know they say about assume.)

We returned home and found that even though we could get into the garage, the kids decided to become conscientious and lock the door between the garage and the house.

We thought about a locksmith, but it's a Sunday night. Breaking glass is messy. I thought about drilling out the lock, but remembered my drill was in the

Tools and materials

Screwdrivers
Pry bar
6-inch mud (putty) knife
Level
Power drill/driver
Reciprocating saw
Shims
3 1/2-inch screws
Insulation
Caulk

basement.

I remembered I had my Sawzall in the garage. Besides, the door really needed replacing anyway.

Replacement is easy

Pre-hung doors make replacement fairly simple, but first get a helper.

Remove the existing door from the frame by pulling the hinge pins or remove the hinges altogether, depending on the type.

Remove the interior trim. It's less likely to break if you start prying with a six-inch mud (putty) knife and complete the removal with a flat pry bar.

Saw between the framing and the jamb with a reciprocating saw (Sawzall) and metal cutting blade to sever nails holding the door. Pry the brick-mold (outside trim) away if necessary. Remove screws holding the threshold plate to the floor. Slide the old jamb out.

Be certain the new door is correct size, swing and jamb thickness. If you're using a lockset and deadbolt, check to make sure it is drilled for them.

Follow tips to install

Most replacement doors include instructions that should be followed. If these aren't included, the installation should go as follows:

■ Slide the new door and frame into the opening. Check that the threshold plate is level, if necessary shim it with wedge-shaped wood.

■ Place shims between the framing and doorjamb at the upper and lower hinges and on the lock side opposite these hinges. Verify that the frame is plumb, square and has an even gap between the jamb and door

all around.

■ Run 3 1/2-inch screws through the hinge plates and jamb into the rough frame at the shim locations. (The traditional way to fasten a door is using 16d finish nails on the lock side, but I like using screws because adjustment is easier.)

Place shims at the middle hinge and lock location and fasten as above. Verify that the door operates properly and adjust if necessary.

Gently stuff insulation between the jamb and frame. Replace the lockset, deadbolt and molding, putty the screw holes and finish.

And most important, don't leave home without your keys.

Harry Jachym, a licensed builder, lives in Plymouth and teaches building trades to high school students.

Compost bins available at sale

In conjunction with Environmental Safety Day in Livonia, the Master Gardener Association of Wayne County has scheduled a compost bin sale 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Saturday, May 12, at Livonia Community Center, 16100 Hubbard (Five Mile and Hubbard). Compost bins will be sold at a reduced price of \$35 plus tax.

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