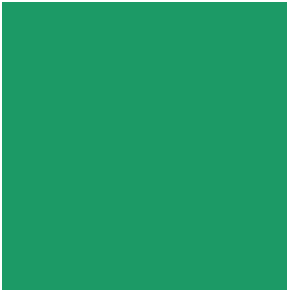




Refrigeration Buying Guide



 **INNOVATIVE
FOODSERVICE GROUP**

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*Thank you for downloading the Commercial Refrigeration Buyer's Guide. At **Innovative Foodservice Group**, we're committed to informing and educating our customers so they can be confident in their purchases.*

In this guide you will find detailed explanations of the different types of commercial refrigeration available for restaurant and foodservice operations, and how to decide which one is best for you. The guide is designed to provide you with scenarios of different industry uses of restaurant refrigeration and how your budget, clientele, location and environment will affect your productivity.

What is Commercial Refrigeration?

In definitional terms, commercial refrigeration is fairly straightforward. A commercial refrigeration unit is simply a device that provides cold storage for food, beverages, and other products that require refrigeration in a restaurant or other dining establishment. Commercial refrigeration encompasses both refrigerators and freezers, and refrigeration units are available in a variety of sizes and styles to suit your kitchen's particular needs.

When do you need a Commercial Refrigerator?

Refrigeration is a critical part of any restaurant environment. No matter what sort of foodservice establishment that you run, it is unavoidable that some things will need to be kept cold to avoid spoilage and preserve freshness. Foodservice health and safety standards are very strict, and keeping your perishables refrigerated is crucial to the quality and longevity of your business. With proper care and maintenance, a quality commercial refrigeration unit will offer you years of convenient and reliable refrigeration.



WHY BUY FROM INNOVATIVE FOODSERVICE GROUP?

A leader in commercial restaurant refrigeration, **Innovative Foodservice Group** carries all the leading manufacturers of commercial freezers, refrigerators, and ice machines. Whether you are shopping for prep tables, display cases, bar refrigeration, or any other piece take a look through our extensive online catalog or give us a call.

What are the Differences in Commercial Refrigeration?

Commercial refrigeration units come in a wide variety of styles and sizes to fit a multitude of different applications. From reach-in refrigeration for your kitchen to refrigerated merchandisers for displaying items to your customers, there is a type of refrigeration to fit any need.



REACH-IN REFRIGERATION

These refrigerators are designed for easy access and are used in kitchens to keep ingredients cold throughout the day until they are needed.



WALK-IN COOLERS

Shipped disassembled and constructed on-site, these walk-in coolers and freezers are used for larger-scale bulk storage refrigeration.

Also Available in Pre-Fabricated Models



REFRIGERATED PREP TABLES

Designed for use on the cook line or in the prep area, these refrigerators feature refrigerated food bins on top, reach-in storage below, and a spacious countertop work surface.



UNDERCOUNTER REFRIGERATION

These reach-in refrigerators can either fit neatly under existing countertops, or they can be pulled out and used as stand-alone work surfaces.



REFRIGERATED MERCHANDISERS

These units feature glass doors or open fronts that allow customers easy access to the products inside. Perfect for displaying drinks, sandwiches, and other small food items.



BAR REFRIGERATION

These refrigerators are made to fit under the counter and out of the way in a commercial bar setting. Some units feature built-in keg storage for serving draught beer.

What Type of Refrigeration Do You Need?

The type of refrigeration that you will need will vary depending on your business type. A commercial kitchen, for example, will need different equipment than a convenience store, bar, or other establishment. Here is a quick overview of which types of refrigeration are best for various restaurant types.

- **REACH-IN REFRIGERATION:** Standard reach-in refrigeration is the perfect fit for your all-purpose refrigeration needs. Typically used in the back-of-house of most restaurants and dining establishments, these refrigerators are used primarily for storing items that are frequently needed throughout the day. The durability and easy to use design of most commercial reach-in units make them ideal for routine use in any commercial kitchen or smaller scale refrigeration application.
- **WALK-IN REFRIGERATION:** Walk-in coolers and freezers are less convenient to install than their smaller reach-in counter parts, but for foodservice providers with larger storage needs, they are a practical solution. Obviously, walk-in refrigerators have a much larger area than a reach-in unit and are well suited to storing items in bulk or keeping larger items refrigerated without consuming excess space in the kitchen's reach-in units. Larger restaurants with high turnover rates may find great use in a walk-in refrigerator for storing larger amounts of their most commonly used ingredients. Walk-in units are also ideal for other food service providers that require large amounts of refrigerated storage, such as butcher shops and bakeries.
- **UNDERCOUNTER REFRIGERATION:** Undercounter refrigeration is most often used in bars and restaurants to add extra refrigeration for smaller items without taking up extra floor space. This is great for restaurants with limited floor area, and most undercounter units are available with an optional, fortified top surface that can be used as a work surface or prep area if the unit is positioned out in the open.
- **REFRIGERATED PREP TABLES:** Refrigerated prep tables are similar to undercounter units but feature a few key differences. Prep table units typically come with reach-in (or drawer-style) refrigeration on the bottom with a refrigerated food pan tray and plastic cutting/prep surface on top. The food pans hold your cold ingredients at a suitable temperature until you are ready to open the lid and begin preparing your next dish or sandwich. These prep tables are perfect for sandwich shops and pizza restaurants that frequently need to select from an array of common ingredients in an assembly line style prep method.
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- **BAR REFRIGERATION:** Bar refrigeration is designed specifically with beverages in mind. Bar refrigerators typically feature a lower profile than standard undercounter units to better fit under taller but shallower bar counters and are designed with shelving intended to comfortably hold larger amounts of beer (and other beverage) bottles. Many bar refrigeration units also feature built-in keg storage with taps for serving draught beer, with some even including refrigerated glassware storage on the side for frosting beer mugs and other glassware.
- **REFRIGERATED MERCHANDISERS:** These refrigerators typically feature insulated glass doors that allow customers to see into the cabinet without opening the door. Other refrigerated merchandising cases feature completely open designs that display items prominently and increase impulse sales by making purchasing an item as easy as reaching into the cabinet. These are most commonly found in convenience stores, delis, and other environments in which self-service is encouraged, but some restaurants also use them as dessert or beverage displays at the front of the restaurant.

Commercial vs. Residential

The differences between commercial and residential refrigeration are often brought into question while upcoming restaurateurs are outfitting their first kitchens. The noticeable disparity in pricing is usually enough to tempt unfamiliar shoppers to purchase residential equipment for their commercial kitchen, but there are several very good reasons for not cutting corners with your refrigeration units.

COMMERCIAL

- Designed to meet health and safety regulations for commercial food service environments
- Made of high-quality materials that will withstand heavy use in busy commercial kitchens
- Offers more internal storage space than residential units of the same exterior size
- Operation is carefully regulated by thermostat to ensure that temperature stays within tight margins of the desired temperature
- Constructed to avoid temperature loss or interference from the surrounding temperature.

RESIDENTIAL

- Not guaranteed to meet commercial health and safety regulations; creates potential liabilities in the kitchen
- Made of lighter-duty materials suited to less frequent residential use.
- Less powerful compressors are not designed to compensate for commercial use and therefore increase the risk of temperature fluctuations
- Minimal insulation can result in heat loss and potentially unsafe refrigerator/freezer conditions.

Sizing Guide to Commercial Refrigeration

Now that you know all about why you need commercial refrigeration in your restaurant, it's time to decide where to start shopping. Once you know which type of refrigeration that you will need in your restaurant, the next step is determining what size is most appropriate for your business. This will vary significantly between restaurants, making it hard to give general advice about what is right for your particular application, but there are a few things to consider when considering refrigeration sizing.

- **SECTIONS:** Commercial refrigeration comes available in a variety of sizes, with the majority of the sizing being determined by how many "sections" the unit has. In a typical refrigerator, a single "section" makes up about 20 cubic feet of the overall capacity, so a one-section will hold between 20-30 cubic feet while a two-section will hold around 40-50 cubic feet. Typically, the number of sections also corresponds to the number of doors on the refrigerator (i.e. two-section refrigerators have two doors, three-section have three doors, etc.), with the exception being half door models. On a half door model (a model with split doors that allow the top or bottom half of the refrigerator to be opened independently), each column of doors represents a single section.
- **AVAILABLE SPACE:** The most obvious concern when choosing your refrigeration units is pre-existing space considerations. Measure the width of your space before beginning the shopping will help narrow the selection down significantly. Many restaurant owners will simply order the largest units that will fit in the available space in their kitchen, but keep in mind that most establishments will require both a freezer and a refrigerator. Plan according to your menu (how much you will need to freeze, how often ingredients from the refrigerator will be used, etc.) and be careful not to order equipment that will consume excess floor space in your kitchen.

- **CONSIDER YOUR CUSTOMER BASE:** The expected traffic of your business is also an important factor to consider. If you expect a high turn-over rate with less food being kept in storage to be used later, smaller units may suffice. Balancing your space to food stored ratio is important to your kitchen's efficiency. While it is definitely problematic to run out of refrigeration space, an unnecessarily large refrigerator with a section that always stays empty will ultimately end up wasting space in your kitchen and needlessly driving up your energy bill.
- **COMPRESSOR LOCATION:** While not entirely a sizing issue, keep the positioning of the compressor in mind when selecting your refrigerator. If you have low ceilings that may block air-flow above your refrigerator, models with bottom-mounted compressors may be the best option for maximum efficiency and product life.

Accessories and Options Available

Once you have selected your refrigerators and freezers, picking out additional options will help make your freezer or refrigerator an even better fit for your space. Here are some options for optimizing your refrigeration space.

1. **ADDITIONAL SHELVING:** Refrigeration units typically come with an adequate number of shelves, but adding additional shelves will give your refrigerator more space for smaller items and will help keep your refrigeration space organized.
2. **CASTERS:** Casters are universally considered worth the extra investment. An easily maneuverable refrigerator or freezer will make repositioning the unit and performing maintenance a much less cumbersome task.
3. **DOOR OPTIONS:** Most units are available with either half door or full door section, or a combination of the two. A full door model is comprised of one tall door per section, while half door models feature split doors that allow the top and bottom halves of the refrigerator to be opened separately, thus reducing heat loss when the unit is opened.
4. **GLASS DOORS:** Some models of refrigeration units are available in both solid and glass door models. Solid doors are inherently more insulated than glass doors, but glass doors enable the contents of the unit to be checked without opening the door. Glass doors are also necessary for merchandising purposes (customers need to be able to easily see what is available), but most restaurants purchase solid door models for use in the kitchen.

5. **PASS THROUGH:** Some refrigerator models can be ordered with doors on both sides. This pass-through design allows the refrigerator to be accessed from both sides, and is a convenient feature when positioning refrigeration units in the middle of the kitchen.
 6. **WORK TOPS ON UNDERCOUNTER:** Many undercounter refrigeration units can be ordered with a thicker top surface to be used as a work or prep station. While the standard stainless steel surface of most undercounter units can be used to perform basic tasks, the thicker top surface will prevent dents and punctures in the steel over time.
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Still need help?

Innovative Foodservice Group has expert staff, fully trained in refrigeration and can find the right product to fit your need.

Anything from commercial restaurants to home use - **give us a call any time Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.**



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