

# Chill Out!

The need for refrigerated displays is always increasing – just visit a modern forecourt shop to see how the marketplace is going. Unfortunately, the cost of the electricity to run them is also going through the roof and it is therefore vital to ensure that your refrigeration works efficiently.

If the compressor on your fridge is running almost continuously, then it really is telling you that it is time to think about maintenance or replacement. Older units tend to cost more to run than modern ones and it can be worth replacing them. When it comes to choosing new equipment, too many shopkeepers buy just on price or the deal. Do your homework – some refrigeration units use far less power than others and a slightly higher initial cost can be repaid many times over in reduced running costs. Look out for equipment that is Enhanced Capital Allowances (ECA) compliant. This is a government scheme that allows businesses to claim 100% tax relief in the first year on eligible energy-efficient equipment – a useful saving.

Make sure your equipment runs efficiently. Set the cooling temperature correctly for the contents – even increasing it by 1°C can save 2-4% of electricity consumption. Provide good natural ventilation to keep the ambient temperature around your fridges low. Do not over-fill the shelves. Do use

night blinds and covers and make sure the lights are turned off if equipment is running overnight. Restock drinks chillers with stock that is cool to start with; it reduces the energy needed to bring the temperature down.

Basic good housekeeping can pay useful dividends. Follow the recommended defrost procedures on your equipment and regularly check door seals for damage. Keep the condensers clean and make sure that air intake vents are not obscured – it is very easy for staff to put stock in front of them. And finally, do check regularly that customers have really closed the doors behind them, as even a narrow crack can cost real money. You can get more advice from The Carbon Trust, an independent company funded by the government to help the UK meet its international climate change obligations. They publish a useful free booklet, reference CTV001, "Retail Energy management – the new profit centre for retail businesses" which contains a lot more useful information, obtainable from the address below:

#### Carbon Trust

- [www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/energy)  
0800 085 2005

#### Enhanced Capital Allowances

- [www.eca.gov.uk](http://www.eca.gov.uk)

#### Energywatch

- A checklist from Energywatch to help you decide on which energy supplier to use can be found at: [http://www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk/images/nine\\_questions1.pdf](http://www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk/images/nine_questions1.pdf)

