Get cash incentives to help you save energy on refrigeration.

Grocery stores put great efforts into maintaining a constant supply of food for people to consume. Their efforts, however, consume a lot of energy.

Whether it's a small neighborhood convenience store or a large superstore with thousands of square feet, energy consumption is primarily due to refrigeration. Many rows of freezers and coolers must operate around the clock, seven days a week, to preserve product quality and ensure safety.

According to an EPA study, commercial refrigeration is "the biggest energy user within supermarkets, accounting for about 40 to 60 percent of electricity consumption."[1] It can take quite a bite from the grocery industry's thin profit margins.

"Refrigeration is our number one target for saving energy when helping our grocery business customers," says Christian Wright, Avista Regional Account Executive. "Unlike product and labor, store energy costs are a variable operating expense that can be mitigated without a huge investment. It's why Avista developed its Commercial Grocer Program."

Avista's Commercial Grocer Program makes it easy and more affordable for participating businesses to achieve savings on their utility bills, explained Wright. Under the program, Avista provides grocers with cash incentives to help reduce the upfront costs of making energy-efficiency modifications to their refrigeration units.

Not only does that save on your energy bills, but ENERGY STAR estimates that every dollar saved in energy is equivalent to increasing sales by $59.[2]

Avista's Commercial Grocer Program lets you retrofit all types of refrigeration equipment, including reach-in, walk-in, and many storage units and display cases. For energy-efficient refrigeration, Avista says preventing cold air from escaping and warm air from entering is key.

Avista provides incentives for anti-sweat controls in refrigerated display cases. Anti-sweat controls regulate the output of anti-sweat heaters. They sense humidity levels around reach-in glass doors, so the heater only operates when needed, improving the case's efficiency.

For additional refrigeration savings in your cases, electronically commutated motors (ECMs) are good for refrigerator evaporators in walk-in coolers or freezers. They offer quieter operation, reduced maintenance and increased longevity when compared to other motors.

Adding ECM controls can help maintain consistent refrigeration temperature by decreasing evaporator fan-motor speed or temporarily turning the fan off once the desired temperature is met.

The Commercial Grocer Program also has incentives available on qualifying new strip curtains for walk-in freezers and coolers, as well as certain door gaskets.

One of Avista's top energy-saving suggestions is for grocers to upgrade their lighting in open and reach-in refrigerated cases to LEDs. LEDs use up to 50 percent less energy than fluorescent tubes and can last over 10 times longer. You'll save energy and replacement costs, plus you'll reduce maintenance time because they don't have to be changed as often.

Not only that, LEDs emit far less heat for improved temperature control, which supports the ability to maintain food quality. LED lighting is better at reflecting the color and textures of fresh foods to create added product appeal, too.

There are a few restrictions within the Commercial Grocer Program, however, Avista may offer incentives for non-standard projects, as well. Grocer business customers just need to contact their Avista account executive to have their projects evaluated and prequalified beforehand.

"Saving energy creates a stronger bottom line for program participants and reduces a store's carbon footprint, too," says Wright. "It's no wonder why so many of my grocer business customers take advantage of our program."

Find your Avista account executive and see qualifying Commercial Grocer Program equipment at myavista.com/bizrebates.

[1] Heather Klemick, Elizabeth Kopits, and Ann Wolverton. (2015). The Energy Efficiency Paradox: A Case Study of Supermarket Refrigeration System Investment Decisions (NCEE Working Paper Series Working Paper # 15-03). EPA. Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2016-03/documents/2015-03.pdf

[2] Supermarkets: An Overview of Energy Use and Energy Efficiency Operations, ENERGY STAR. Retrieved from https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/buildings/tools/SPP%20Sales%20Flyer%20for%20Supermarkets%20and%20Grocery%20Stores.pdf

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