


OCT 10 2024 INCIDENT: Coolant coils were punctured when chipping away ice to defrost a fridge on campus

Defrosting Fridges and Freezers

Defrosting a fridge or freezer may seem like a task with little risk, but if safe practices are not followed, this can lead to injuries or damage to equipment. If a coolant coil is punctured, hazardous gases/liquid coolant will be released and leak out of the unit.

Follow These Steps to Safely Defrost Your Fridge:

1. Prior to defrosting, remove anything that needs to be kept cold.
2. Prepare the area by making sure electrical cords will not be exposed to melting liquids, place absorbent materials or buckets on the floor to catch draining liquid and put up a **Slippery When Wet** floor sign.  If there is a large quantity of ice, have a mop and bucket on hand to help with the cleanup.
3. Determine if the cooling coils are exposed. Exposed cooling coils should only be defrosted by unplugging the fridge, opening the door, and letting the ice melt. To speed up the process, you can place a bucket of hot water on the coils.
4. When all the ice buildup has been removed, this is a great time to clean out the fridge and freezer by giving it a wipe down with disinfectant. Ensure all the liquid has been cleaned up off the floor to prevent any slips and falls. Plug the fridge and freezer back in and allow the temperature to stabilize before restocking.



With exposed cooling coils, it is especially important to never use anything to chip away at the ice. For concealed cooling coils, you can use a plastic spatula to help scrap off the ice. Do not use metal spatulas, ice picks, knives, chisels or other sharp objects. This may puncture the cooling lines, resulting in a coolant leak.