

5.10 Freezers & Refrigerators & CFCs

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) comprise the gas (also known as Freon) used in the heat transfer system in appliances and must be removed by a technician with certified equipment prior to disposal at the landfill (40 CFR 81.154-162). CFCs released to the environment damage the ozone layer in our planet's atmosphere.

Steps for Freezer and Refrigerator Management:

Before accepting appliances for disposal check for food and CFCs (Freon)

- Freezers are often full of food when they fail and they are not always cleaned out prior to disposal. This leaves the operator with a freezer full of rotten food to deal with.
- By having the owner remove the doors prior to bringing it to the landfill, the operator can verify that no food has been left in the unit. Most recyclers require this as a safeguard.

Segregate the refrigerators and freezers in the landfill

- Segregating the freezers and refrigerators from other waste reduces the likelihood of gas lines being punctured and releasing CFCs into the environment.
- Store the appliances in an upright position with space behind the appliance to facilitate CFC removal.

Remove the CFCs

- CFCs must be removed by a certified technician with certified equipment.
- The landfill operator needs to document when CFCs are removed.

Mark the appliance once CFCs have been removed

- Once the CFCs are removed make a clear mark such as a spray painted X on the appliance so it is easy to identify which appliances are ready for disposal or backhaul.

Disposal or backhaul

- With CFCs removed the appliances can be crushed and buried *OR* staged for eventual backhaul.

Backhaul

Appliances have little to no value to recyclers. Once the CFCs are removed, appliances are essentially scrap metal, so the backhaul of appliances should be considered a low priority. Household hazardous waste should be backhauled before appliances. If appliances have been sitting around for more than two years waiting for backhaul, they should be disposed of in the landfill.



Freezers with the doors removed. To keep them from filling with water they should be stored open side down or in a covered area.

Helpful Tips:

- Refrigerator and freezer doors are great for making signs at the landfill to direct users where to dispose of trash, to designate disposal areas for different waste streams, or to communicate any other important information about the landfill.
- Keep in mind that if appliances such as refrigerators and freezers are crushed, foam and plastic from inside the unit will be everywhere. Crush these items close to where they will be disposed to limit the spread of litter.

Examples:



Refrigerator marked after the CFCs have been removed.



Refrigerators and freezers segregated from the rest of the waste.