

Reach-in cooler

Undercounters and milk coolers included. How to run it, and when to call.

What normal looks like

35–38°F

(2°C to 3°C) is the usual setting. Food stays at 41°F (5°C) or colder.

4 in

(10 cm) of space below the coil housing, and the middle of each shelf clear for air.

Rests

and defrosts every time the compressor stops, on most coolers. No ice should stay.

Monthly

condenser cleaning on many makers' lists. A dirty coil can use up to 20% more energy.

WRITE IT HERE

Our setting _____ Technician _____ Phone _____

Every day

- 1 Read the temperature** at opening and closing, and log it on page 3. The thermometer goes in the warmest part.
- 2 Let the door close itself.** Do not push it wide open, and do not slam it: it can bounce back open.
- 3 Leave room for the air.** 4 inches (10 cm) below the coil housing, and the middle of each shelf clear.
- 4 Feel the air from the grille,** never the compressor. Warm is normal. Too hot to keep your hand there means the condenser is struggling.
- 5 Load food cold.** Warm food, or too much at once, takes hours to pull down.

When to call a technician

Today

- Food above 41°F (5°C). Move it to another cold box now. A small cabinet warms fast.
- Food is freezing, or the compressor never stops.
- Metal on the cabinet tingles. Switch it off at the breaker first.

Within a day

- Ice behind the fan guard that does not clear. A warm cabinet is next.

This week

- A door that will not close or seal: a torn gasket, a sagging hinge, or a cabinet out of level.
- It runs all the time.
- An undercounter running warm on the cookline. Today if the food is warm.
- Water inside or on the floor. Today if people can slip.

Tell them the temperature, since when, how hot the grille air feels, and your log.

⚠ Never

- Never chip ice off the coil.
- Never touch the compressor. Feel the grille air instead.
- Never block the grille, or box the cabinet in.
- Never keep resetting a unit that trips. Reset once at most.



How it works

and what normal looks like, with real readings



Something wrong?

Seven symptoms, the likely reasons, and what to check



The checklist

Yes or no questions that point to the likely reason

Basic care of the equipment

What you can do yourself, without opening the cabinet's machine compartment. Anything behind a panel, any wiring and anything that needs gauges is your technician's job. This is a starting schedule: your manual comes first.

Every week

- ☐ **Door gasket.** Look all the way round for tears, hard spots and gaps, and check it sits in its groove. Clean it with warm soapy water. Never scrape it.
- ☐ **Door.** Open it a few inches and let go. It should swing shut and seal by itself.
- ☐ **Coil.** Look behind the fan guard. No ice that stays.
- ☐ **Shelves.** 4 inches (10 cm) below the coil housing, and the middle of each shelf clear.

Every 2 weeks

- ☐ **Thermometer.** A thermometer in the warmest part should agree with the display.
- ☐ **Grille air.** Warm, not hot. Listen too: a compressor that clicks off after a few minutes and tries again is often too hot.
- ☐ **Hinges.** The door does not drop or rub the frame.
- ☐ **Under the cabinet.** No water on the floor.

Every month

- ☐ **Clean the condenser.** Unplug the cabinet. Take off the grille, if your manual shows how. Brush along the fins, never across, then vacuum. Refit it, plug in, and check the fan turns.
- ☐ **Drain tube and pan.** The tube sits in its pan, is not clogged, and the pan is not overflowing.
- ☐ **Setting.** Check it against the one written on page 1.
- ☐ **Space round the cabinet.** Nothing boxing it in, and the gap your maker asks for.

Every 3 months

- ☐ **Level.** The cabinet sits level, so the door swings shut and the water reaches its pan.
- ☐ **Drawers,** on undercounters. Pans and carts damage drawer gaskets. Look at each gasket and slide.

Milk coolers: what is different

- ☐ **Setting.** Near 36°F (2°C), as Continental ships them. Never below 34°F (1°C) on a cold-wall cooler: its walls ice over.
- ☐ **Lids and doors** closed between meal periods. Continental says a forced-air cooler should never run more than 4 hours with them open, or its coil may ice.
- ☐ **Load milk that is already cold,** after about an hour of pull-down if the cooler has been off.
- ☐ **Louvers and grilles clear,** with 3 to 4 inches (7.5 to 10 cm) of space at the sides, or what your maker asks for.
- ☐ **Condenser, monthly.** Unplug it, then brush and vacuum behind the grille. Wear gloves: the fins are sharp.
- ☐ **Wall ice** on a cold-wall cooler: unload it, open the lids and doors, and unplug it for about 30 minutes. Never chip it.
- ☐ **Drain hose** to a floor drain, never into the condensate pan, with the cabinet sitting level.
- ☐ **No extension cords,** and no abrasive or bleach cleaners.

⚠ Never chip ice off the coil. Unplug the cabinet before you clean the condenser.

