

**GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF  
REFRIGERATORS, FREEZERS  
AND COMBINED FRIDGE-  
FREEZERS IN A GARAGE OR  
SHED**

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## **1. Issue**

Domestic refrigerators, freezers and fridge-freezer combinations are designed to be located in the home. More specifically, these appliances are designed to be located in an ambient temperature of greater than 16°C, although some appliances may be located in environments with lower ambient temperatures down to 10°C.

Placing domestic refrigerators, freezers and fridge-freezer combinations in unheated locations such as garages or sheds can pose problems. In no circumstances should these appliances be located where they could get wet, e.g. through splashing or standing in water.

The information below relates to protecting the food contents of appliances, but this is not the only thing that needs to be considered. These days, appliances of all sorts contain electronic circuits and these circuits may not be able to operate at very low temperatures.

You should always check the manufacturer's instructions before locating and using your appliance.

## **2. Refrigerators**

Refrigerators are designed to keep their contents at a temperature of about +5°C, though some refrigerators contain an adjustable thermostat to enable this temperature to be varied slightly. If the room in which the refrigerator is situated is hotter than the interior of the refrigerator then the appliance will operate to keep the contents cool. If the room in which the refrigerator is situated is colder than the interior of the refrigerator, then the appliance will not turn on and the contents will be at the room temperature. This is not usually an issue when the refrigerator is kept indoors and is also usually not a problem when the refrigerator is kept in unheated garages or sheds, although it can become a problem on extremely cold days when the temperature drops below freezing (0°C) where some food products might be damaged by such low temperatures.

## **3. Freezers**

Most standalone freezers these days are rated four stars and so they keep their contents at a temperature not higher than -18°C. While freezers operate the same way as refrigerators they are not as susceptible to low ambient temperatures as temperatures in the UK do not get below -18°C.

## **4. Combined Fridge-Freezers**

Combining the functions of a refrigerator and a freezer into one unit can bring many benefits, but may also bring some problems if you wish to place an appliance in an unheated location (such as a garage or shed).

There are many designs of fridge-freezer and if you choose the wrong type and locate your appliance in an unheated location then you may find that, on cold days, the freezer compartment may not be as cold as it should be and, if the cold spell lasts a few days, you may even find that the contents defrost.

If you are planning to place a fridge-freezer in an unheated room then you should first contact the manufacturer or retailer to see if the appliance is suitable for the place you have in mind.

Please remember, too, that in the winter even your home can become an unheated location if you go away on holiday and turn the heating off. In these situations, a few days of temperatures below about 7°C the freezer compartment may defrost.