

# Supermarkets told to shut the door as it emerges open fridges use one per cent of Britain's electricity

By Helena Horton  
The UK Sunday Telegraph

Supermarket fridges should be closed, campaigners have said, as it emerges that the appliances use up one per cent of all UK electricity.

Most shops use open fridges, which use far more energy to stay cool than alternatives with doors. These are favoured by supermarkets because it means customers are able to grab products quickly. However, they have been criticised by campaigners and MPs as a "massive waste of energy and money" which are contributing to global warming.

A study carried out with the support of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs found that "retail food outlets are responsible for around three per cent of total electrical energy consumption". It added that "refrigeration systems account for between 30 per cent and 60 per cent of energy used."

Mary Creagh MP, who is the chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, told The Telegraph: "It's a terrible waste of money and some stores have introduced closing doors.

"However, there is the same problem with the High Street when doors are left open in the middle of winter and the [central heating] escapes out. From next April all companies of a certain size have to declare their greenhouse gas footprint, so this



Gem Golding has asked people to sign a petition forcing supermarkets to put doors on their fridges.

should spur them into measuring their gas bills and trying to work out ways to reduce them."

A Friends of the Earth spokesperson added: "With the world in the midst of a climate emergency our shops and stores should make it a top priority to save energy and slash the emissions that are roasting the planet. Supermarkets must ensure that their fridges and appliances operate to the highest

energy efficient standards – and if they won't, the government should make them."

Campaigners argue that supermarkets could cut their energy use by a quarter if they simply put doors on fridges. Many retailers have fitted their open fridges with energy-saving technology, but environmentalists say further savings could be made if doors were installed.



Instead of adding doors, many big supermarkets say they will try to make open fridges more efficient. Getty images, courtesy of <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales>



Now, almost 25 000 people in the UK have signed a Parliament petition urging MPs to force supermarkets to use fridge doors.

The petition states: "Retailers in the United Kingdom unnecessarily waste huge amounts of energy on open fridges and freezers. Climate change threatens our planet. If all supermarkets had doors on their fridges and freezers it would save energy the equivalent of the entire residential population of Poland". The campaign was started by brother and sister Jonathan and Gem Golding, from Brighton.

Gem Golding posted on Facebook: "Aside from the cost wasted in energy bills, the emissions this could save us is monumental. Putting doors on fridge/freezers could cut electricity usage by up to 40%.

"Apparently this could inhibit shoppers though? Dunno about you but think I'd still get my Ben and Jerry's. In France, supermarkets have signed up to a voluntary agreement to put doors on three-quarters of their 450 miles of fridge aisles by 2020. So why is no one else taking action?"

Her brother, 28, told the Mail on Sunday: "I happened to be in a restaurant and they had given me a plastic knife and fork, so I was in an environmentally conscious mood. In the corner of my eye I saw a fridge and it was open, and I just thought that couldn't be very environmentally friendly. I think people are very happy to sacrifice convenience for the environment and that is the same with plastic as well."

The UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said in a statement: "The Government is taking action to improve product

Image courtesy of <https://freor.com/>



Most shops use open fridges, which use far more energy to stay cool than alternatives with doors. Image courtesy of <https://freor.com/>

energy efficiency. Our minimum performance standards remove inefficient products from the market, and labelling raises awareness of the best ones. Minimum energy performance standards, otherwise known as Ecodesign regulations, are technology neutral so do not prescribe that manufacturers should increase efficiency by putting doors on appliances.

"Rather they set a minimum energy efficiency limit that all manufacturers placing products on the market must meet. The legislation therefore leaves it up to the manufacturer as to how they meet the requirements, which could include but is not restricted to putting doors on fridges," the statement read. **SR**

