

COLLECTION OF USED FRIDGES AND FREEZERS

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report proposes a new charging system for the collection of used fridges and freezers. Changes to legislation have created additional controls on the disposal of fridges and freezers and will greatly increase the cost of collecting these items.
- 1.2 Environment Panel Members were informed of the current situation with regard to changes in legislation for the disposal of fridges and freezers at their meeting on 17 January 2002. However, the financial implications were not known at that time.

2. OZONE DEPLETING SUBSTANCES

- 2.1 It has been known for some time that the chloro-flouro carbon (CFC) gases used in fridges are harmful to the earth's ozone layer. Although alternative refrigerants are now used, most fridges and freezers manufactured before 1994 still contain CFC gases in their cooling systems and in the insulation foam which surrounds the fridge and freezer compartments.
- 2.2 For many years, the Council has removed the CFC refrigerant from the cooling systems of the used fridges and freezers that it collects. Similarly, the CFC refrigerant was removed from all used fridges and freezers taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centres. On 1 January 2002 the Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations were introduced. These require all of the CFC gases to be recovered from used fridges and freezers. CFC gases must now be removed from the cooling system, as before, but also from the insulation foam. It is no longer sufficient to remove the CFC gases from the cooling system and then scrap the used fridge or freezer. The insulation foam must now be removed from the used fridge or freezer and the CFC gases recovered from this material.
- 2.3 The responsibility for recovering CFC gases from used fridges and freezers rests with Hampshire County Council (HCC) who are the Waste Disposal Authority. There is currently no equipment available in this country to remove CFC gases from insulation foam. All of the used fridges and freezers collected by New Forest District Council are currently being put into storage by HCC until such time as they can find satisfactory disposal arrangements. The cost of storing the used fridges and the eventual cost of disposal and recovery of the CFC gases will be met by HCC.

3. COLLECTION OF OLD FRIDGES AND FREEZERS

3.1 Although this Council does not have to meet the additional cost of storing and disposing of old fridges, New Forest District Council is responsible for the cost of collecting these items. One unexpected result of the introduction of the Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations on 1 January 2002 has been the disruption of the take-back market for used fridges and freezers. Whereas previously, many retailers would take back old fridges when they sold new ones, now most retailers have stopped taking back old fridges and are referring their customers to the local Council for a collection. As a result of this, there has been a significant increase in the number of fridges collected by the Council since the start of the New Year. Fridges collected since 1 January 2001 have been as follows:-

January 2001	110
February 2001	120
March 2001	138
April 2001	116
May 2001	140
June 2001	133
July 2001	118
August 2001	134
September 2001	106
October 2001	119
November 2001	144
December 2001	185
January 2002	361

3.2 The Council currently charges £7 (inc. VAT) for a Special Collection of up to 8 items of bulky waste. Special Collections are used by local householders to dispose of items such as old furniture, cookers and fridges. The charge for each Special Collection does not fully cover the cost to the Council of providing the service. An increase in the number of Special Collections, as a result of requests to collect additional fridges, will result in additional cost to the Council but only a proportional increase in income.

3.3 The proposed charge for Special Collections for the 2002/03 financial year is £14 (inc. VAT) for up to 5 items. Although this new charge will go some way towards meeting the cost of collecting additional fridges, it will still not cover the cost of providing the Council's Special Collection Service. The Council is required to use a separate vehicle to collect old fridges, so that they are not damaged in transit. Careful handling of the used fridges prevents the escape of CFC gases and also makes it possible for some of the fridges to be recovered at the disposal point for refurbishment and re-use.

3.4 It is proposed to introduce a special charge for the collection of old fridges and freezers but it would mean that those residents who require an old fridge or freezer to be collected pay a realistic charge. It would not discriminate against those residents who do not wish to dispose of an old fridge or freezer.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 It is expected that the Council will be asked to collect about 200 fridges per month as a result of the new regulations. This will require the Council to hire an additional Special Collection vehicle.

4.2 The cost of operating the additional vehicle plus the cost of dealing with extra dumped fridges is expected to be as follows:

Vehicle Costs	£12,500
Labour Costs	<u>£19,500</u>
Total Collection Cost	<u>£32,000</u>
Cost of dealing with dumped fridges	<u>£2,000</u>
TOTAL COSTS	= <u>£34,000</u>

Anticipated number of fridges and freezers collected per month = 200

Anticipated number of fridges and freezers collected per year = 2,400

Cost per collection = £13.33

4.3 In order to fully recover the cost of collection it is suggested that a charge of £20 (inc. VAT) is introduced for each old fridge or freezer collected. Based on the costs shown in 4.2 of this report, a surplus of about £6,000 will be made. As it is likely that fridges and freezers will be collected on a separate vehicle, it is suggested that no concessions should be offered for a special collection of fridges combined with other items. In such cases, the standard charge for a special collection should apply in addition to the charge for each fridge collected.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The aim of the Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations is to reduce the emissions of CFC gases into the atmosphere. By collecting old fridges and freezers and ensuring that they are disposed of properly, the Council is helping to protect the earth's ozone layer.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The charge suggested in Section 4.3 of this report represents a considerable increase in the charge for collecting old fridges and freezers. It is inevitable that an irresponsible minority may be tempted to avoid the charge for collecting the old fridges and freezers by trying to dump these items.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The introduction of the Ozone Depleting Substances Regulations has resulted in an increase in the number of requests for the Council to collect old fridges and freezers.
- 7.2 In order to meet the expected cost of dealing with additional fridges in 2002/03, the Council would need to charge £20 (inc. VAT) per item to collect old fridges and freezers. This could result in a surplus of £6,000.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is recommended that a special charge for the collection of old fridges and freezers should be introduced on 1 March 2002.
- 8.2 It is recommended that the special charge for collecting old fridges and freezers shall be £20 (inc. VAT) for each item collected.
- 8.3 It is recommended that the special charge for collecting fridges and freezers shall be additional to the cost of collecting any other special collection items.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Environment Review Panel
18 October 2001 Report D

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