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### ***PROGRAM NOTICE 07-05***

TO: Weatherization Coordinators  
FROM: Jim Newton  
DATE: March 28, 2008  
RE: Refrigerators/Freezers

The purpose of this notice is to inform you of changes to our refrigerator/freezer policies.

#### **Background**

Refrigerators located in unconditioned areas, such as unheated porches and garages, require significant more energy to run during hot weather and may not operate correctly in cold weather.

According to Energy Star, a refrigerator in an 80 degree environment will use 22-25% more energy than a refrigerator in a 70 degree environment and a refrigerator in a 90 degree environment will use 45-50% more energy than one in a 70 degree environment. If a refrigerator is in an environment where the ambient air temperature drops below 40 degrees, the thermostat on the refrigerator may not run its cooling and defrost cycles for the appropriate amount of time for the appliance to operate properly.

We have also been told that the refrigerant (HFC-134A) now used in refrigerators and freezers does not handle extreme temperatures as well as the refrigerant that used to be used in refrigerators and freezers.

Refrigerator warranties may be voided if the appliance is located in an environment where the ambient temperature is above or below certain temperature thresholds.

Based on feedback from the network and research on the subject, it appears there is an increase in the frequency of problems with compressors in refrigeration appliances. Compressors used to be warranted for five (5) years but many manufacturers now warrant them for only one (1) year. Extended warranties for five (5) years can usually be purchased for \$150+. The cost of replacing a compressor is \$500 or more.

#### **Changes**

Due to the factors described above, we are making the following change:

*New refrigerators and freezers should only be located in intentionally or unintentionally conditioned areas. Existing refrigerators and freezers located in unconditioned areas should not be metered nor replaced.*

Based on the information regarding compressor problems and warranties, we are making the following change:

*If a refrigerator or freezer that was installed by the agency quits working and is no longer covered by the warranty, the appliance may be replaced by the agency within five (5) years of the date it was installed.*

The reason we are not allowing the purchase of extended warranties is that it is not cost effective to purchase extended warranties on every refrigerator/freezer when only a small percentage of those appliances will quit working within five years.

These changes should be considered revisions to our policies on refrigeration appliance replacement. The changes will be incorporated into the Refrigeration Appliance section of the General Appendix the next time we do a comprehensive update of the manual. Please provide copies of this notice to your evaluators.

cc: Bureau staff