

## *How Do You Prepare Your Restaurant's HVAC and Refrigeration for the Summer Heat?*

"I cover two-thirds of the continental United States, which as you can imagine has a very wide variety of climates. The main item I stress to my restaurants is to wait to do their spring coil cleanings until after any large pollen, cottonwood or other vegetation blooms. My office is located in Indianapolis, Ind., and we experience a very heavy cottonwood bloom in late May or early June. The seeds are carried in a small cocoon of cotton that is light as a feather, and it is quickly sucked up into the coils of any rooftop condensers. There are many varieties of vegetation across the country that deposit similar items like this, which can significantly decrease the efficiency of the HVAC/R equipment. It can vary from leaves to pollen, thus it is important for the individual operations to pay attention to these natural occurrences and plan accordingly."

— *Scott A. Marsh, Facilities Construction Manager, Central Region, Arby's Restaurant Group*

"Our PMs are set up in cycles. For my restaurants, the first cycle to get ready for summer is to address/replace torn refrigeration gaskets and hardware in January and February. My vendor dates each gasket with a permanent marker, which also helps restaurant managers know the age of each gasket in their restaurant. The second cycle is spring PM, where the HVAC/R vendor chemically cleans coils on all equipment, cleans all the ice machines again and checks equipment operation, with the intent of finding any issues that may have developed since the previous fall. Any needed repairs are made with a pre-approved NTE limit so the repair cycle is not bogged down with too many approvals for smaller repairs. This year in North Texas, my vendors are utilizing a new streamlined scope of work and a reconfigured one-page PM checklist for use in the field. This was developed as a project and partnership between lead technicians and the facilities department so it is a more usable document. We got rid of the three-page 'check-the-box' form, which was over-detailed and not properly utilized."

— *Angela Hughes, CRFP, Senior Facility Manager, Pizza Hut*

"As we are on a minimal quarterly PM cycle, I have defined set minimum operational maintenance items that need to be done on spring AC service:

- Filter change.
- Belt inspection/change. We spec annual change out of belts and prefer it be done on spring service.
- Chemical clean of evaporator and condenser coils.

(Condenser coils should be cleaned again halfway through the season.)

- Visual inspection of mechanical systems and fittings, including fans and covers and damper linkages.
- Start unit in cooling mode to verify operation of major components: compressor, condenser and evaporator fans.

These tips will help start the season."

— *Jim Blackwell, Facilities Manager, Rita Restaurant Corp.*

"I have it written in all of my PM contracts on HVAC/R to do a spring start-up, usually in March, to check all HVAC units for operation, including all fans, compressors, clean all coils and condensation pans, and check all operating controls, including T stats."

— *Bob Fonville, CRFP, Director of Facilities, Fuddrucker's*

"The easiest process would be to shut down, but our companies want the revenue, so we must do full spring cleaning while restaurants are open for business. Tasks consist of cleaning of all condensers/evaporators, filter changes, belt changes and ensuring back-up belts are stored in the units, visual inspections and repairs to any damages from hail. We also check starters/controls, tighten lugs and electrical connections, check fuses and ensure back-ups are available in the bottom of the switch gear box. As the temperature rises from spring cool to early-summer warm, we check the operation of the refrigeration systems under some load. Get ready for pollen, coil cleaning and regular PM over the summer, depending on environmental conditions. Then do some praying for a warm, not blistering summer."

— *Don Turner, Facilities, DARDEN*

"We have our heat come early and stay long here in Georgia. About this time of year, I schedule preventive maintenance visits for all of my HVAC rooftop units. I negotiated a flat rate with our vendor. They clean the coils, change the filters, check and change belts if needed, apply lubrication and calibrate the units. They send me photos of stores with unusually dirty air filters so I can schedule more frequent filter changes at those stores. I have a standing arrangement with them that I pre-approve any repairs needed under \$300. This prevents unnecessary travel charges for me and wasted time waiting for return calls or work orders for them."

— *Ren Doughty, Facilities Service Manager, Starbucks Coffee Co.*

*(continued on next page)*

## *How Do You Prepare Your Restaurant's HVAC and Refrigeration for the Summer Heat?*

*(continued from previous page)*

"At Pizza Hut, we do a spring and fall PM on our HVAC systems. The focus of the spring PM is to make sure our equipment is ready for summer; the fall PM makes sure we are ready for winter. We combine our refrigerated equipment with the HVAC PM. The scope of work is fairly detailed to each piece of equipment. The main issue is that we are consistent with this process. During the PMs, problem equipment is identified and repairs are made. It costs a lot less to make the repairs when the techs are already on site, versus calling them out in the summer when it is hot and they are overloaded with work already. This also avoids a lot of overtime charges. I always ask our vendors to send me a list of the restaurants that they are doing PMs on. This way when I visit the restaurant I can follow up on the PM to make sure my expectations are met."

— *Dan Hill, Senior Facility Leader, Pizza Hut*

"I like to keep things simple. During the spring PM, a cooling season start-up is performed, filters changed, the condenser coil cleaned and repairs for deficiencies found during the start-up are quoted."

— *David Huyett, Facilities Maintenance, Fox & Hound Restaurant Group*

"I contract only for the minimum service: coils cleaned, filters changed, belts changed annually, spare belts left inside the units, condensation pans cleaned, drain lines blown out, pan tabs installed and a general operational check of the unit itself and a report of its overall condition. On store visits, I check the coil and belt condition along with the condensation pans and contact the PM company as needed. When required by company policy to utilize a more extensive checklist, I eliminate the 'check off' portion of the forms and insert spaces for hand-written values. I find that the techs are more likely to take the required measurements if they have to record a value rather than just placing a check mark in a blank. I also require the starting and stopping times to be written on the checklist itself."

— *Rod Towns, Facilities Manager, La Madeleine*

"Starbucks Coffee Co.'s Florida Region conducts a spring and a fall HVAC PM that includes a visual inspection by a technician, who also surveys all HVAC equipment for model and serial number. The technician chemically cleans all of the condenser coils and adds a pan tablet for all units. The technician

replaces all of the belts, unless they are new, and checks the evaporator coils to see if they are clean and in good condition. The technician contacts his office in order to receive approval for any recommended work. The refrigeration and pastry case PM is done at the same time as the HVAC PM and includes a visual inspection of all refrigeration equipment, a brushing or blowing out of the condenser coils, cleaning of the burn-off pan, replacement of gaskets if needed and a temperature check."

— *Melissa Schrader, Facilities Service Manager, Starbucks Coffee Co.*

"In the past, the division maintenance managers created and managed their own PM programs, but this proved to be a challenge when it came to mining the data. In late 2010, we decided to standardize the Wendy's PM program beginning in January 2011. By standardizing the PM program, Wendy's was able to create nine distinct PMs for each of our company stores. Some of these PMs occur multiple times throughout the year, making the total PM count 17 per store. Included in these are the refrigeration and HVAC PMs that are sent to our in-house maintenance staff. We give the techs leeway as to an exact date to perform these PMs based on geographical location and workload. We set completion deadlines of 180 days and measure the techs' timeliness using the scorecard functionality within our work order management system. By creating and maintaining a consistent PM program across all Wendy's company stores, we will be able to measure an ROI based on reducing the number of demand calls and extending the life of our equipment.

There is a store-level component to many of our PMs. The refrigeration PM contains items that are done quarterly by the store personnel:

- Check cord, plug and receptacles
- Clean or replace filter if equipped
- Clean evaporator fan and guard
- Check for airflow obstructions
- Ensure door closes and seals on its own
- Check casters/legs
- Check and tighten hinges and handles
- Check door gasket
- Check temperature (cooler: 36 to 38 degrees; freezer: 0 degrees)
- Calibrate thermometer if applicable.

— *David F. Smith, Manager Engineering Systems, Wendy's* 