

GREEN AND COLD

The whole world is discussing green issues - we look at the green implications of the increasing number of fridge vans on our roads and how you, the CV Dealer, can help the situation.

There is little doubt that the market for 3.5 tonnes refrigerated delivery vehicles is on the increase. You only have to look at any residential street at six o'clock in the evening to see a raft of Sainsbury's, Tesco and Ocado delivery vehicles blocking the roads. It doesn't stop with the main players, as an increasing number of



traditionally non-food outlets stock chilled items, so the number of chilled delivery vehicles increases to cope with the demand. The chilled food sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the food industry and chilled foods currently represent about 10% of all UK retail foods by value.

In years gone past some distribution may have been carried out with less regard to food safety

standards than at present. Increasing enforcement and better operating practices means that refrigerated vans are becoming more and more prolific.

Electric Green

Keeping things cold does harm the environment, but the impact can be minimised in recommending the most suitable refrigerated unit for the job. Italian manufacturer, Eurofrigo, is seeing a surge of interest in its latest, inverter battery driven fridges for vans - the B2500XT and B2500 Skyline units. The makers claim the all electric fridges are greener, easier to install and cheaper to run and maintain. The systems have several notable green features which differentiate them from conventional direct-drive or diesel systems. Operations director, Danny Bell commented, "with increasing environmental concern generally, operators see the battery driven fridges as a sure means of improving their own green credentials."

In terms of construction alone, the units, being single-piece, have fewer core components. This means that there are fewer redundant or disposable parts, thereby reducing the amount of "hard waste" at the end of a fridge's operational life. In addition, being fully self-

contained, the electric units have no remote engine driven compressor, associated pipe work or brackets. Bell continues, "the ancillary parts of a conventional system are typically responsible for around 70% of fridge failures that occur."

With electric units, the need for replacement parts is also minimised with the electric units - eliminating the need for recycling. Bell again, "Being 'one-piece' the units are fully sealed before leaving the factory so the risk of gas leakage is eliminated. Importantly, the fitting of the B2500XT or Skyline units to standard non-refrigerated vans does not increase the permissible CO2 emission levels set for those vans, which makes for a much cleaner environment. Early trials with the electric units have also shown an 8% reduction in vehicle fuel consumption compared to other systems - a significant cost and ecological benefit for operators."

"The refrigeration circuit is completely closed at the time of installation meaning that no specialised technician is required and no time-consuming brazing or threading is necessary. As a consequence the installation time is cut by around 50 per cent compared with that of other rival products" says the manufacturer.

Most 3.5 tonne vans have a suitable alternator for the application. Where this is not the case, it is possible to install a second alternator and battery, as with ambulance conversions to provide a suitable power source. Other benefits of the installation are the increased payload area on a box body installation, as both the condenser and evaporator are on the outside of the body.

One city based catering company, who runs several temperature-controlled delivery vans around Greater London told us: "It is becoming harder to resist the "greener" equipment options such as Eurofrigo's cleaner all electric fridge units when your drivers are breathing in harmful fumes and CO2 emissions daily when delivering in and around town. These decisions are now a matter of conscience and as a business we will be looking at electric fridges and electric vehicles going forwards."

According to the survey, businesses ranging from single vehicle operators to the largest fleet operators, are beginning to follow the lead of the largest blue chip refrigerated fleet operators, such as Sainsbury's, Asda, Tesco and Waitrose. These companies are all committed to reducing the harm caused by their transport systems and are increasingly seeking out and opting for low noise and low polluting vehicles and ancillary equipment for their "direct to customer" delivery services.

Get the Insulation right

You can have the greenest refrigeration system in the world, but it will be of little use if the vehicle's insulation is lacking and the installation is of poor quality. Check out the credentials of any supplier you are recommending to your customers.

If the vehicle manufacturers are happy to accredit the company, then there is a strong



• Samers' Citroen line up