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The following is a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) guidance document that provides further clarification on definitions applicable to residential refrigeration products to aid manufacturers in determining whether a given basic model is covered by DOE's regulations. This guidance document represents the Department's interpretation of its existing regulations and is exempt from the notice and comment requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act. See 5 U.S.C. § 553(b)(A).

Guidance Regarding the Definition of "Compact Refrigerator/Refrigerator-Freezer/Freezer"

This document provides guidance with respect to a recently published rule. Consistent with the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, as amended by section 312(c) of the Energy Independence and Security Act (codified in 42 U.S.C. 6295(b)(4)), the United States Department of Energy (DOE) amended its energy conservation standards for residential refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers. *See* 76 FR 57516 (September 15, 2011). Manufacturers must comply with those standards by September 15, 2014.

The rule also made other changes, including the amending of the "Compact refrigerator/refrigerator-freezer/freezer" definition found in 10 C.F.R. § 430.2. That definition currently defines a compact refrigerator/refrigerator-freezer/freezer as "any refrigerator, refrigerator-freezer, or freezer with total volume less than 7.75 cubic feet (220 liters) (rated volume as determined in Appendix A1 and B1 of [10 CFR Part 430]) and 36 inches (0.91 meters) or less in height." The amended definition removed the 36-inch height requirement, effectively expanding the "compact" definition to include other designs with a total volume of less than 7.75 cubic feet but exceeding 36 inches in height. These products are currently treated as "standard-size" refrigerators.

Since the final rule's publication, manufacturers have sought guidance regarding the timing of the new definition. In DOE's view, the new "compact" definition applies in conjunction with the new 2014 standards. Prior to that date, DOE will continue to assess compliance with the current energy conservation standards by applying the current "compact" definition. Specifically, until September 15, 2014, DOE will continue to treat the "compact" category as comprising those products that have a total rated volume of less than 7.75 cubic feet (220 liters) and a height of 36 inches (0.91 meters) or less.