

Emerging Trends

Jimmy Kollmer
National Cold Chain Manager
Polar Leasing Company



Shaping the Walk-In Cold Storage Mobile/Rental Sector

The U.S. walk-in cooler and freezer market is expected to hit \$3.05 billion by the end of 2024, with projections showing a 67% growth to over \$5 billion by 2034—a 4.4% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in volume.

The mobile/rental segment, which includes portable and temporary refrigeration solutions, currently accounts for roughly 15% of the total market value. These units provide a distinct edge through mobility, allowing businesses to easily rent cold storage units for events, emergencies, or periods of heightened storage needs—without the financial burden of a long-term investment. This flexibility is particularly valuable for industries like food service, pharmaceutical storage, event management, and emergency response, where short-term demand spikes or unpredictable situations make permanent cold storage options impractical.

By maintaining optimal temperature conditions, walk-in coolers and freezers not only fulfill consumer expectations but also significantly extend product shelf life. This leads to reduced waste and enhanced resource efficiency across various industries, including food service, pharmaceutical and healthcare.

This industry report is specifically tailored to the mobile/rental segment, delving into the latest trends and advancements that are impacting the future of walk-in cold storage solutions.



PRIMARY APPLICATIONS

- Emergency Response**
 Delivering rapid refrigeration solutions in disaster-affected areas to ensure the preservation of perishable goods and vital supplies.
- Pharmaceutical Storage**
 Enabling the safe transportation of temperature-sensitive medicines, supplements and ED drugs, especially with the rise of online health platforms.
- Floral Shops**
 Maintaining the freshness of flowers during transportation and temporary storage to safeguard quality.
- Dairy Distribution**
 Adapting to varying storage requirements during peak production periods to minimize spoilage and satisfy consumer demand.
- Mobile/Pop-Up Restaurants**
 Supporting temporary kitchen setups for food preparation, enhancing versatility and responsiveness in food service operations.
- Blood Banks**
 Upholding critical temperatures for blood storage during transport to guarantee safety and compliance with regulatory standards.
- Catering Services & Event Management**
 Providing adjustable cold storage options to fulfill the requirements of various events, optimizing food service management.



Substantial Growth

The mobile and rental segment of the walk-in cooler and freezer market is experiencing remarkable growth, driven by a myriad of factors transforming the landscape of temporary refrigeration solutions. Businesses across diverse sectors are increasingly turning to adaptable and efficient cold storage options, driving a surge in demand for mobile and rental units.



Unique Requirements

Customization has become essential in the walk-in cooler and freezer market, fueled by the diverse storage needs and space constraints faced by consumers across various industries. In response to these challenges, manufacturers are innovating by developing highly specialized refrigeration solutions that cater to specific requirements and preferences. This bespoke approach enhances the functionality and efficiency of cold storage units and enables businesses to streamline their operations and make the most of available space. Ultimately, this leads to improved performance and greater customer satisfaction.



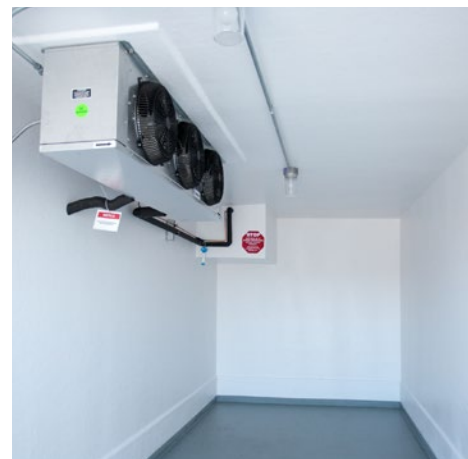
A Thriving Food & Beverage Industry

The growth of the U.S. food and beverage industry—sparked by population expansion, rapid urbanization, and changing consumer preferences—has significantly boosted the demand for walk-in coolers and freezers. This dynamic sector is not only addressing the rising need for dependable refrigeration but is also navigating the complexities of a more diverse marketplace. Additionally, the rise in food imports has intensified the demand for robust cold storage solutions capable of efficiently preserving a wide array of perishable goods. Consequently, there has been a notable surge in interest and investment in mobile and rental refrigeration units, particularly among restaurants, hotels, supermarkets, convenience stores, and other food-related businesses.



Stringent Standards

Stricter regulations regarding food safety and storage are compelling businesses to prioritize funding for advanced refrigeration solutions that ensure optimal temperature control. Adhering to these increasingly rigid standards is not merely a legal obligation; it is critical for preserving the integrity and safety of products. This challenge is especially pronounced for small- and medium-sized original equipment manufacturers (OEM) part suppliers, who encounter distinct obstacles in achieving compliance. State-of-the-art refrigeration units are engineered not only to satisfy these rigorous standards but also to enhance operational efficiency, reduce spoilage, and improve overall product quality. These enhancements are vital for maintaining a competitive edge in the market and fostering consumer trust.





Demand for Ready-to-Eat Products

Growing consumer preference for convenience and healthier food options is propelling substantial growth in the ready-to-eat food segment. This trend has been further accelerated by an upswing in online grocery shopping—especially post-pandemic—prompting traditional retailers to strengthen their digital infrastructure and cold storage capabilities.



Growth in Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals

The rise in funding and innovation within the biotechnology sector is contributing to the heightened demand for specialized cold storage solutions. Efficient storage is crucial for preserving the efficacy and safety of biotechnological products, vaccines, and research samples. Moreover, the growth trend in pharmaceuticals among health-conscious and aging populations further emphasizes the necessity for portable and adaptable cold storage options.



Growing Demand for Compounded Medicine & Supplements

The increasing demand for compounded medicines, supplements, and erectile dysfunction drugs is fueling a significant growth area, as these sensitive products often require refrigerated shipping solutions. Online health platforms like Hims and Hers have driven up demand for home deliveries of temperature-sensitive medications, where gel packs are used alongside mobile refrigeration to maintain stability during transit. Refrigerated units offer critical advantages, such as temperature consistency and extended cooling, ensuring product safety and effectiveness for long delivery routes.

A recent case study in New York City exemplifies the innovative applications of mobile cold storage solutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the city faced unprecedented challenges in food distribution and emergency response. Mobile walk-in coolers and freezers were deployed throughout the city to assist local food banks and caterers in managing perishable goods. These portable units allowed organizations to adapt quickly to fluctuating demand, maintain optimal storage conditions, and reduce food waste during a time of crisis. The flexibility of rental refrigeration solutions was crucial for ensuring that vulnerable populations received fresh and nutritious food.

CASE STUDY

NYC Emergency Response and Food Service Management



Focus on Sustainability

Refrigeration technology and air conditioning comprise about 15% of global electricity consumption, underscoring the pressing demand for energy-efficient solutions. Mounting environmental initiatives from both governments and consumers are driving the market toward sustainable products that minimize emissions and improve energy performance.



Southern U.S.: A Hotspot of Growth

The Southern U.S. is poised to dominate market demand, projected to represent nearly 40% of the market value share in 2024. This growth is elevated by regional temperatures and humidity levels, alongside rapid urbanization, and a thriving food service sector. Additionally, the strategic location of major ports along the coast has created a pressing need for easily accessible cold storage facilities to efficiently manage the influx of imported perishable goods.



Navigating the Future

The mobile and rental segment for cold storage solutions is experiencing expanding and transforming rapidly as businesses strive for more adaptable and efficient solutions to meet their short-term refrigeration requirements. The marketplace is responding to accommodate users' needs through advancements in design and functionality.



Dual-Temperature Zone Coolers

Walk-in coolers featuring dual-temperature zones are increasingly popular in the mobile and rental segment, providing businesses with the versatility to transport and store assorted products at their ideal temperatures within a single unit. This innovative solution simplifies inventory management by allowing for the simultaneous handling of both perishable and non-perishable items, thereby enhancing operational efficiency across various sectors.



Integrated Inventory Management Systems

The integration of walk-in cold storage solutions with advanced inventory management systems is becoming commonplace in the mobile and rental segment, facilitating real-time monitoring of stock levels. This integration enhances operational efficiency and empowers businesses to make more informed decisions regarding restocking and order fulfillment. Additionally, features such as touchless controls and sensors enable hands-free operation, creating more sanitary and safer operating environments.



Energy Efficiency

Manufacturers are prioritizing sustainability by developing energy-efficient refrigeration solutions that significantly reduce environmental impact. This includes the adoption of refrigerants with lower global warming potential (GWP), ensuring compliance with stringent regulations while minimizing the carbon footprint of refrigeration units. Substantial investments in research and development are directed toward creating these low-GWP refrigerants, effectively addressing climate concerns associated with high-GWP hydrofluorocarbons. This strategic shift not only helps customers meet regulatory requirements but also enhances the overall energy efficiency of walk-in coolers and freezers, positioning businesses for a more sustainable future.



Embracing the Future

As the landscape of cold storage continues to evolve, the need for innovative and efficient solutions is more crucial than ever. Mobile and rental walk-in coolers and freezers are not just enhancing operational efficiency; they are revolutionizing industries from emergency response to food service management. In this dynamic environment, businesses must meet rising consumer expectations while navigating complex regulatory requirements. By partnering with experts like Polar Leasing, companies can stay ahead of the curve and attain the support necessary to thrive in an ever-changing market.

Ready to Explore Cold Storage Options?

CONTACT

sales@polarleasing.com • (877) 260-7903

Polar Leasing experts are ready to assist you with all your cold storage challenges. Whether you need advice on mobile refrigeration solutions or tailored rental options, we are here to help. Contact us today to discover how we can support your business needs.

ABOUT POLAR LEASING COMPANY

In early 2002, Polar Leasing Company, Inc., was created by Polar King to accommodate the growing demand for walk-in refrigeration rentals. It has expanded its walk-in rental fleet to cover most of the United States and other parts of North America, offering both short- and long-term rentals to industries of all types. Within the last five years, we began the process of building a specific division dedicated to the Life Science Supply Chain. Polar Leasing offers the largest all-electric fleet of temporary refrigeration, with more than 80 distribution depots and a 24/7 service hotline.

For more information, visit polarleasing.com or contact Polar Leasing, 4410 New Haven Ave, Fort Wayne, IN 46803 USA. In an emergency, call (877) 674-1348 or write rentals@polarleasing.com.

