

Refrigerator Failure Patterns in Independent Appliance Repair

A Field Study of Service-Call Composition, Brand Distribution, and Repair Cost

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Field data: [Reservoir Appliance Repair](#), Jackson, MS Metropolitan area

Key findings

- In a study of 305 refrigerator service calls from June 2025 to September 2026, 48% involved the ice maker, the single largest repair category by a wide margin.
- "Refrigerator not cooling" (the failure consumers most often fear) only accounted for about 6% of refrigerator calls.
- Frost, defrost and drainage problems were the largest category after the ice maker, at 14% of calls.
- Brands made by Whirlpool Corporation (Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Maytag and Amana) appeared in about 39% of refrigerator records, a figure that reflects how common these brands are, not how often they fail.
- Ice maker repairs averaged \$263 and ranged from \$90 to \$425: \$90 to \$175 for cleaning or minor fixes, and \$275 to \$425 when a replacement part was required.

Suggested citation

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Abstract

We characterize the composition of refrigerator service calls at an independent appliance repair company in the Jackson, Mississippi metropolitan area, selected for its mix of home warranty and private-pay work. Refrigerators account for 305 (11.1%) of the company's 2,747 service jobs completed between June 2025 and September 2026. Classifying complaints by keyword, we find that ice maker faults constitute 48% of all refrigerator calls, the single largest category by a wide margin, while the remaining 52% is distributed across frost and drainage, water supply, leakage, door seal, cooling and noise complaints. Brand analysis shows the Whirlpool corporate family (Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Maytag and Amana) appearing in roughly 39% of refrigerator records. From a set of ten priced ice maker repairs, the mean invoice is US\$263 (range \$90 to \$425), split between labor (mean \$144) and parts (mean \$171 when a part was required). We report methods, results and limitations, and we treat all figures as directional estimates for this caseload rather than population parameters.

Keywords: appliance repair; refrigerators; ice makers; field service data; failure analysis; repair economics

1. Introduction

This paper examines the refrigerator service records of one independent appliance repair company.

Our objectives are threefold: (i) to quantify the distribution of refrigerator service calls by presenting complaint type; (ii) to describe the brand composition of those calls; and (iii) to establish a cost benchmark for the most common repair. We deliberately focus on one partner company whose caseload spans home warranty and private-pay work in a major metropolitan market, and we frame every result accordingly.

2. Data and methods

2.1 Setting and sample selection

All data derive from Reservoir Appliance Repair, an independent appliance repair company and RepairAble partner serving the Jackson metropolitan area, Mississippi's largest. Reservoir was selected as the study partner because its caseload combines home warranty and private-pay work in roughly a 60/40 balance, covering both homeowners with home warranty plans and those who pay for repairs directly.

The sample comprises 305 refrigerator service records ($n = 305$), drawn from all 2,747 service jobs the company completed between June 26, 2025 and September 23, 2026. Each record includes a job title or complaint description and technician notes. Cost benchmarks come from itemized ice maker invoices ($n = 10$).

Refrigerator records were identified by case-insensitive matching of each job's title, notes or complaint description against the terms refrigerator, fridge, freezer, ice maker, and their common spelling variants.

2.2 Classification of complaint type

Because complaint type is recorded only as free text, each refrigerator record was assigned to one or more repair categories using a keyword rule set (for example "leak", "dispenser", "frost", "not cooling", "ice maker"). Two summaries are reported: a non-exclusive tabulation, in which a record may contribute to multiple categories, and an exclusive ice-maker-versus-other split, in which any record mentioning an ice maker fault is assigned to the ice maker category and all others to a residual "other" group. Records with no interpretable symptom text ($n = 36$ among non-ice records) are retained in denominators but not attributed to a specific non-ice category.

2.3 Brand identification

Brand was taken from a structured brand field where one was recorded, and otherwise inferred by matching manufacturer names within the job text. Of the 305 refrigerator records, 220 (72%) contained at least one identifiable brand. Because a minority of records reference more than one appliance or brand, brand tallies are reported as mentions and treated as approximate.

2.4 Cost measurement

Cost benchmarks are drawn from itemized ice maker invoices (n = 10). For each we record the total invoice and its decomposition into labor and parts. Cost figures are presented as a benchmark range rather than a precise mean.

3. Results

3.1 Refrigerators within the overall caseload

Refrigerators represent 305 of 2,747 service jobs (11.1%), placing the category among the company's more frequently serviced appliance types.

3.2 Distribution of repair types

Table 1 reports the non-exclusive tabulation of refrigerator complaint categories. Ice maker faults are the most frequently cited complaint, appearing in 147 of 305 records (48%). Because categories are non-exclusive, the records column sums to more than 305.

Repair category	Records	Share of 305
Ice maker / no ice	147	48%
Water: dispenser / filter	64	21%
Frost / defrost / drainage	62	20%
Leaking water	50	16%
Door / gasket / seal	42	14%
Not cooling / insufficient cold	22	7%
Noise	17	6%
Standalone freezer unit	11	4%

Table 1. Refrigerator complaint categories, non-exclusive keyword classification (n = 305 refrigerator records). A record may appear in more than one category.

3.3 Ice maker faults versus all other repairs

Under the exclusive split, ice maker faults account for 48% of refrigerator calls and all other repairs for 52% (Table 2). The largest single non-ice category is frost and drainage (14%), not the loss-of-cooling failure that consumers most often fear, which represents about 6% of calls.

Grouping	Records	Share of 305
Ice maker / no ice	147	48%
All other refrigerator repairs	158	52%
Frost / defrost / drainage	44	14%

Water: dispenser / filter	39	13%
Leaking water	35	11%
Door / gasket / seal	35	11%
Not cooling / insufficient cold	19	6%
Noise	11	4%
Symptom not specified	36	12%

Table 2. Exclusive ice-maker-versus-other split, with the composition of the "other" group below it (non-exclusive within that group; rows may overlap).

3.4 Brand distribution

Table 3 reports brand mentions among the 305 refrigerator records. Whirlpool, KitchenAid and Frigidaire lead. Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Maytag and Amana belong to a single corporate parent; aggregated, this Whirlpool family accounts for approximately 118 mentions (about 39% of records), exceeding the next four brands combined.

Brand	Mentions	Share of 305
Whirlpool	61	20%
KitchenAid	51	17%
Frigidaire	42	14%
GE	26	9%
Samsung	25	8%
LG	9	3%
Kenmore	6	2%
Electrolux	5	2%
Scotsman	4	1%
Maytag	3	1%
Amana	3	1%
Sub-Zero	2	1%
Viking, Forno, U-Line, Hotpoint	1 each	<1%
Whirlpool family (Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Maytag, Amana)	~118	~39%

Table 3. Brand mentions among refrigerator records (n = 305; 220 records named at least one brand). Tallies are approximate; see Section 4.

3.5 Cost of ice maker repairs

Across the ten itemized ice maker invoices, the mean total invoice is US\$263, with all observations falling between \$90 and \$425 (Table 4). Two cost regimes are evident: labor-only interventions, principally cleaning or minor adjustment, cluster between \$90 and \$175, while repairs requiring a replacement component (water inlet valve, ice module or cutting grid) range from roughly \$275 to \$425. The mean labor charge is \$144; the mean parts charge, when a part was used (7 of 10 jobs), is \$171.

Measure	Value (USD)
Mean total invoice	\$263
Observed range	\$90 to \$425
Mean labor component	\$144
Mean parts component (when part used, n = 7)	\$171
Labor-only fixes (cleaning / minor)	\$90 to \$175
Part-replacement fixes	\$275 to \$425
Priced observations	n = 10

Table 4. Ice maker repair cost, itemized invoices (n = 10). Figures are a benchmark, not a population mean.

4. Discussion

Three findings stand out. First, the refrigerator category is dominated by a single failure mode: ice maker faults alone account for nearly half of all calls, indicating that ice-making subsystems, not the sealed refrigeration system, drive most refrigerator service demand in this caseload. Second, the feared "it stopped getting cold" failure is comparatively rare (about 6%), while frost, drainage and water-supply issues collectively dominate the non-ice remainder. Third, the observed cost of the most common repair is modest relative to appliance replacement, with every priced ice maker job completing at or under \$425.

The brand results warrant care in interpretation. A high share of calls for a given brand reflects that brand's installed base as much as its reliability; the prominence of the Whirlpool family is consistent with its large US market share and should not be read as a reliability ranking. For the same reason, the near-absence of premium low-volume brands (for example Sub-Zero and Viking) reflects rarity in the local market rather than demonstrated durability.

5. Limitations

- **Scope.** All observations come from one partner company in one metropolitan area. Results may differ in other regions, climates or customer bases.
- **Free-text classification.** Repair type and brand are inferred from unstructured titles and notes via keyword rules; misclassification and multi-appliance contamination are possible, and category tallies are non-exclusive.

- **Cost coverage.** Cost benchmarks rest on ten itemized ice maker invoices and are indicative rather than statistically robust.
- **Volume is not reliability.** Brand call shares are not normalized to installed base and must not be interpreted as failure rates.
- **Selection effects.** Some brands (for example Samsung and LG) are more often routed to manufacturer-authorized service, which may reduce their representation in an independent company's records.
- **Snapshot.** Counts reflect the company's records as of September 24, 2026, and will change as new jobs are recorded.

6. Conclusion

Within this partner's refrigerator caseload, ice maker faults are the defining service demand (48% of calls), the remaining 52% is spread across frost, water, leakage and door seal complaints, the Whirlpool corporate family leads brand representation (about 39%), and the most common repair typically costs between \$90 and \$425. These figures are offered as a transparent, reproducible benchmark for this caseload.

Appendix: Data provenance and reproducibility

Data steward: Reservoir Appliance Repair, via the RepairAble platform. Records were queried read-only from the production datastore on September 24, 2026.

Source data: the company's job history (job titles and technician notes) and itemized repair invoices (labor and parts totals).

Refrigerator filter: case-insensitive match on refrigerator, fridge, freezer, ice maker, icemaker and common variants within each job's title, notes or complaint description.

Denominators: type and brand analyses use $n = 305$ (refrigerator records); the overall refrigerator share uses 2,747 service jobs; cost analysis uses $n = 10$ (itemized ice maker invoices). Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number and may not sum to 100 because of rounding and non-exclusive categories.

Notes

Disclosure: This working paper analyzes proprietary operational data from Reservoir Appliance Repair, a RepairAble partner, via the RepairAble platform. Figures are estimates for this caseload and are not audited. Nothing in this paper constitutes a manufacturer reliability rating.

Related: [Whirlpool refrigerator settlement guide](#)