

## *TKO Doors Help Regional Supermarket Chain Be a Cool and Safe Place to Work*

**Company:**

Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.  
Rochester, NY

**Challenge:**

Preventing moisture accumulation along the loading dock area

**Solution:**

VertiCool® Doors by TKO®

**Industry:**

Food & Beverage

**Geography:**

Rochester, NY

Preventing moisture on the loading dock floor helps keep employees from skidding into injuries. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, slips and falls are a leading cause for injuries in the U.S. workplace, accounting for almost 15% of all lost-time accidents. The National Safety Council estimates slips lead directly to the hospitalization of more than 8.7 million people annually.

In nearly all cases, a dry loading dock is a safer loading dock. Preventing moisture from building up on the loading dock is of particular concern for cold storage facilities such as Wegmans Food Markets, Inc. in Rochester, NY.

While they may be a family-owned, regional supermarket chain, over its nearly 100 year history, Wegmans has become highly regarded for its quality products and service. Recently the chain was named Best Grocery Store by the Food Network and the Top Grocery Chain in its category by Consumer Reports.

Wegmans' positive reputation begins with their exceptional attention to the safety of their workforce. Since winning their first award in 1998, Fortune magazine has continually named Wegmans one of the 100 Best Places to Work.

Cold storage facilities can be prime



spots for moisture accumulation, especially around the loading dock door, and this moisture build up was definitely a problem for Wegmans' Facilities Maintenance Supervisor, Jeff Smith. Like all cold storage managers, Smith has been fighting the battle against moisture around the dock for years.

He thought he might have eliminated the issue once and for all by installing vertical rise freezer slab doors with heating strips embedded into the panels. The strips were intended to slightly warm the doors and prevent the accumulation of moisture, swelling and deformation.

The heating strips and the coils, purchased as an option with the doors, shorted out and did not operate as intended. Unfortunately, Smith and his crew had no way of knowing because the warmth created by the strips is designed to be undetectable to the touch.

But what Smith and his team did begin

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- Jeff Smith, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor for Wegmans

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to notice was the poor performance of their dock doors. The doors began retaining moisture and taking on weight, putting additional strain on the doors' drive motors. As the doors got heavier and heavier, Wegmans started experiencing numerous maintenance problems at an alarming pace, such as broken gearboxes and clutches.

Steve Olak, Maintenance Manager, noted that the seal around the doors was a contributing factor to the condensation and added weight, particularly during warmer months. When the floors became wet, slippery and dangerous, Olak had to have the cleaning company spend extra time mopping up the floors to reduce the risk of injuries which caused increased monthly expenses.

"By the time we became aware of these problems," notes Smith, "we were past the warranty and the manufacturer wouldn't honor it. So we figured we had to bite the bullet and purchase all new doors," he added. The solution was VertiCool® by TKO®, brought to the Rochester DC by Leo Kelly, Territory Manager for TKO Dock Doors.

The VertiCool door was designed specifically for use with Vertical Storing Dock Levelers on the temperature controlled docks of cold storage facilities. The 4" thick, R-23 rated panels equal the thickness of the building wall to provide superior thermal protection against energy loss and increased year-round efficiency.

Another area of potential energy loss on Wegmans' dock was the door seals.



In a 20 degree temperature controlled dock, the single seal provided on the vertical rise freezer doors was not enough to separate the cold dock from the ambient exterior temperatures.

VertiCool doors are equipped with dual side compression seals, which fill gaps along the door and are mounted directly to the door panel rather than the door jamb. Raising the door removes the seals from the impact zone to avoid damage and provide a consistent, continuous seal. The VertiCool door also has an equally durable double-loop compression seal at the bottom for a tight seal on the warehouse floor, without running the risk of the door freezing to the dock.

The number of thermal breaks is also reduced on the VertiCool. Rather than utilizing standard 24" high panels, the VertiCool employs 48" high panels making for 50% less exposure between the panels.

Moreover, the VertiCool door offers a full-height polymer thermal break track, which is enclosed in an energy-reflective foil fabric. Unlike traditional metal tracks, the VertiCool's track design not only helps prevent energy loss, it also prevents the accumulation

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of moisture on the dock that can cause mold buildup and make the dock floors dangerously slippery.

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Another feature Smith appreciates is that TKO motors are easier to access than the predecessor doors, although the motors on the older doors needed to be accessed much more often. This is due to the VertiCool door panels' closed-cell XEPS foam core. Along with providing a significant level of insulation, the foam resists moisture accumulation, leading to longer life for the door's motor.

From reduced maintenance costs and energy loss, the VertiCool doors Wegmans installed have made their all-around operations much more efficient. "The VertiCool doors have cleared up all of our issues involving our dock doorways," says Smith, "and we are looking to replace all of our cold storage dock doors with TKO VertiCool doors." he mentioned.



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