



Type(s) and Quality of ICE

Most likely, regular cube ice, also called bag ice, will be readily available in your area. Look in your local yellow pages for ice suppliers. Your local ice wholesaler may deliver the ice directly to you. At first you may have to use your own freezer for storage but as your business builds and your ice volume increases, your ice supplier may provide an outdoor ice merchandiser for storage.

While cube ice is almost the same throughout the country, block ice comes in two very different forms. There is compressed block ice and solid block ice. **DO NOT USE COMPRESSED BLOCK ICE FOR SHAVED ICE MACHINES.**

Compressed block ice is made at ice plants by forcing chunks of ice or crushed ice into compression molds. This type of block ice does not provide a smooth shaving surface for your block shaver. Compressed block ice usually is filled with air spaces and **will not** produce as smooth as ice as a solid block.

Solid block ice is the preferred form of block ice used in the shaved ice industry. This type of block ice produces the best snow for shaved ice. However, solid block may not be readily available in all parts of the country. Where available, block ice is usually purchased in 12 - 15 lb or 300 lb blocks. We suggest the 12 lb blocks for easy handling and storage. If needed your local ice house can often cut down the 300 lb blocks for you.

If your business continues to grow or if block ice is not available in your area, you may find that you can make your own ice at a fraction of the cost. You can freeze your own ice blocks in our specially made ice block tubs. Simply fill the tubs with water and place into a deep freezer for 2 to 3 days. When freezing your own ice blocks be sure not to freeze your ice too fast. We suggest setting your freezer to around 10 degrees Fahrenheit. This will allow the ice to freeze slower and will produce a better ice block. Ice frozen too fast will crack when shaved. This is extremely important!

You can also make your own cube ice by purchasing your own ice maker. Look in your local yellow pages under restaurant equipment or ice making equipment for more information on cube ice makers in your area.

Tempering ICE

For block shaved ice shavers the temperature of your block ice can make or break your shaved ice business. Block ice that is too cold when shaved will not stick together. Ice that is too warm will create a clumpy mess. Either way, you will not get ideal results if your ice is not at the proper temperature.

To solve this problem you can “temper” or “warm up” your ice blocks in order to get the correct ice consistency. Tempering allows the ice to reach the ideal shaving temperature of 18 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit. To temper your ice, simply remove an ice block from the freezer about 25 to 30 minutes before you need it for shaving. You can place your block ice in 5 gallon buckets or restaurant busing trays during the tempering process. Once the ice block begins to melt on the outside surfaces, simply place the block into chest type ice coolers (48 or 60 quart coolers works best) in order to maintain the temperature. This sweating or melting of the ice blocks will be your signal that that ice has reached the tempered stage. If for some reason your block ice gets too warm either during the tempering process or while in the coolers, the ice will become clumpy and will not hold flavor well. If this were to happen simply place the ice back into the freezer to refreeze.

One tip that will help with tempering is to adjust the temperature of your block ice storage freezer as close to 18 to 20 degrees as you can. Simply place a freezer thermometer inside your freezer to determine the temperature setting. Allow 24 hours to pass for each temperature adjustment before taking your readings.

Tempering ice will take some practice to get used to. Depending on how busy your business is you will need to adjust how many ice blocks are tempered at one time. You will also need to get a feel for how often you need to replenish your tempered blocks. Remember, if you temper too many blocks at one time you can always refreeze them.

For shaved ice and snow cone machines that use cube ice, tempering is not necessary.