

IS YOUR OVEN SHABBOS COMPLIANT? (PART 1)

Based on our recently launched online guides, this column sets out to raise awareness of the problems inherent in the use of domestic ovens on Shabbos. We will clarify that even models which carry a 'Sabbath mode' feature are not guaranteed to be compliant with halachic requirements. We will explore the options available for those ovens which do not carry an approved 'Sabbath mode', and we will direct the householder towards ways to assess whether their oven can be used on Shabbos.

What Is 'Sabbath Mode' In An Oven?

In many cases, use of the word 'Sabbath mode' is a misnomer as manufacturers have not adequately researched the issues involved. When manufactured with input from a competent halachic authority, an oven working in 'Sabbath mode' is truly 'Sabbath friendly' as it complies with the laws of Shabbos – allowing one to access food which is heating in the oven. In all cases, the food must have been placed in the oven before Shabbos. Here in the UK, an increasing number of models offer this mode, but are manufactured without halachic input; as such, their use on Shabbos must be evaluated on a product-by-product basis. Where available, information from the manufacturer can assist in the evaluation process, and one needs to consult a halachic authority on the correct use of these models. By their own admission, some companies have manufactured ovens which raise serious concerns even if 'Sabbath mode' is operating. Members of the public are advised to research the model they are buying, and where necessary, to resort to other methods of heating food.

Which Concerns Do 'Sabbath Mode' Ovens Need To Address?

The following is a list of the issues which an oven can present in its Shabbos use; different models can show some of or all of the following problems:

- Light and fan turn on or off when door opens or closes
- When oven is operating, element switches off when door is opened
- Heating element reignites when door closes
- Writing on LED display screen appears or changes when door is opened

A competent 'Sabbath mode' will address all issues by neutralising the effects of opening and closing the oven door on appliance activity. This mode also addresses issues related to convenience and technical design. Amongst them is an 'auto cut off' feature – designed to lower the risk of fires; this safety feature will halt oven activity after a period of time. To allow for the convenience of Yom Tov cooking, the oven continues to run for up to 72 hours, but at a relatively low temperature.

What Could Be Wrong With An Oven Which Claims To Operate In 'Sabbath Mode'?

When designed under Rabbinic supervision, the mode will have dealt with all relevant issues. When input is lacking, not all issues are necessarily addressed. Taken as an example, one company told us that when the door of their oven opens, the power supply to the heating element will be immediately shut. When questioned, this company told us that they do not claim their mode to be halachically compliant with the laws of Sabbath. Use of the term Sabbath mode is certainly misleading in this context.

If The Oven I Have Bought Offers 'Sabbath Mode', Can I Open The Door When Sabbath Mode Is Activated?

If the oven is manufactured under supervision – with a *hechsher*, we advise you to consult the halachic guidance notes prepared by the relevant authority. To clarify whether your model is one of the rare few in the UK which has a *hechsher* we recommend you check the following link <https://www.star-k.org/appliance/>.

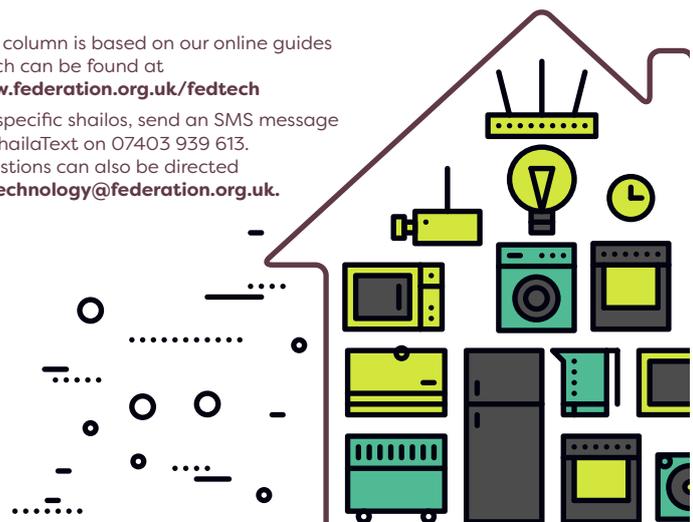
To date we are not aware of any locally available models which are under supervision. If your model does not appear on the Star-K's website you can e-mail us with a product name and number, and we will attempt to investigate further.

If your oven's Sabbath mode is indeed not supervised, its use would only be permitted after thorough investigation.

In Part 2 next week: Sabbath mode ovens on the UK market, and their use on *yom tov*.

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IS YOUR OVEN SHABBOS COMPLIANT? (PART 2)

The objective of this column is to raise awareness of the issues involved in using an oven on Shabbos. Last week, we concluded that all ovens need to be thoroughly investigated before they are used for heating foods on Shabbos, and that this is the case even if the appliance boasts a 'Sabbath mode'. This week we will clarify the circumstances under which models which do not carry a 'Sabbath mode' can be used on Shabbos.

Our family keeps food warm for the shabbos meal in an oven, the oven is set on a timer – why do we need a sabbath mode?

Appliance design has changed significantly in recent years, presenting new challenges to *shemiras* Shabbos. In modern appliances, opening the door triggers a few reactions, including switching on and off the lights and fan and in many cases changes are made directly to the heating element. In these appliances, a competent Sabbath mode is necessary to allow for their Shabbos use.

Older models were certainly simpler; in most ovens, the light bulb could be removed or was only lit when the oven was heating. Generally, a timer function was available, which, once reaching the end of the desired cooking period, would totally shut off all appliance function – doors could be opened and food removed with no *halachic* concern. If your oven is of the more traditional type, you may well be able to use it. Read the next question for instructions on how to check if your oven is permitted for use.

My oven does not carry a 'sabbath mode', can it be used on shabbos?

The simplest way to use an oven is to set the appliance to run on a timer, and to remove all food only once the cooking program has finished. To use the appliance in this way, you need to check that the door opening will not trigger any electronic activity; you can check the appliance in the following way:

- Set the timer to run for a short period of time and watch as the cooking program comes to an end
- When the cooking program comes to an end, does the alarm deactivate itself after a short

while? Does it need to be deactivated by pressing a button? Does the door opening deactivate the alarm?

- Once the timer has finished, open the door – does the door opening trigger the operation of a light? Does it make changes to the display screen? Does it start/stops the fan?
- If the door opening does trigger some of the above reactions, is it possible to neutralise these problems by taping down a small door switch (look carefully and you may find it)? Can the door switch be taped down?

I have checked my oven and the timer setting is problematic as it needs to be deactivated by pressing a button - can the oven door be opened when the appliance is running?

In the previous section, we gave instruction for the use of an oven through setting a programmable a timer to shut off all appliance activity. Where this is not possible we need to consider whether the door can be opened to retrieve the food when the appliance is running.

Opening the door when the appliance is running is generally problematic as the appliance will trigger the heating element sooner than it otherwise would have done. To use the appliance can one would need to ensure to open the door only when the element is already running. This will be possible if the appliance has an 'element on' indicator light. To use the appliance in this way, you will also need to check that the door opening will not trigger any electronic activity.

The appliance should be checked in the following way:

- The appliance should have a light which glows to indicate that the heating element is working. The oven should be set to run - does a light show? Does it turn off periodically?
- Does the appliance turn the element off when the door is opened? Open the door and watch the red light – if it ceases to show immediately as you open the door, the element may turned off and the appliance cannot be used.
- A further advisable way to test this is by turning off all other power devices in the

house and running only the oven. Look at your electric meter as the oven door is opened and closed; if the meter indicates that the power flow stops or starts immediately as the door is opened/closed, then the oven function is problematic.

- As you open the door, does the appliance respond by making changes to a display screen, starting or stopping a fan or operating the lights? If the appliance fails on any of these points, it cannot be used on Shabbos, unless the door switches have been deactivated.
- **On Shabbos, when the indicator light glows to show that the element is active and heating, the door may be opened.**

Can the appliance be used on yom tov?

Many householders who can manage without the use of their ovens on Shabbos, substituting it instead for a *blech* or hotplate, find that it is Yom Tov when an oven is really needed. However, in many cases, the appliances which do not feature 'Sabbath mode' will automatically cut off after running for a prolonged period of time. This safety feature becomes an imposition on Yom Tov. Even if your appliance can run uninterrupted for the necessary number of hours, you need to run the above-mentioned checks to ensure that the appliance is not reacting directly to door openings. Check that lights, fan and heating element are not activated or deactivated when the door is opened and closed.

One area where the laws of Yom Tov allow for slight leniency is where the appliance reacts *indirectly* to the door opening. Although on Shabbos, opening the door when the appliance is running is possible only if an indicator light shows that the element is already functioning, on Yom Tov the door may be opened even if opening the door may cause the element to cycle sooner.

To summarise, if the appliance does not react **directly** to door openings, the door may be opened on Yom Tov even when the oven is heating.

In next week's column: a look at Sabbath mode ovens produced by NEFF Bosch and Siemens.

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IS YOUR OVEN SHABBOS COMPLIANT? (PART 3)

This column sets out to clarify the possibilities of oven use over Shabbos. Last week we looked at the possibilities of using an oven which does not carry a Sabbath mode. This week we will look at the appliances manufactured by NEFF Bosch and Siemens – as these are the models which are most commonly bought by members of our communities

Are there any ‘Sabbath mode’ ovens on sale in the UK which have been found to be compliant for use on Shabbos?

We have researched the appliances manufactured under the brand names NEFF, Bosch and Siemens (NBS), and have concluded that in their models currently on the market most Shabbos related issues have been resolved.

Nonetheless even these models are not free of any Shabbos questions, and may only be used in accordance with Rabbinic advice and guidelines.

Why can’t the nbs ovens be used freely on Shabbos in Sabbath mode?

To answer this, we need to explain how the oven maintains its temperature. When the user sets the oven to run at 100 degrees, the device does not maintain this temperature permanently. Instead, it controls the temperature through use of a thermostat. When the unit detects that the cavity is cooling down it provides power to the element. Conversely, when the desired temperature has been reached, the element is switched off.

Introducing cold air to the oven cavity cools down the internal temperature quicker than otherwise. As a result, the element is triggered sooner than otherwise would have been the case. This indirect interaction with the heating element is halachically problematic, and a variety of approaches exist to resolve the issue.

How can a thermostatic oven such as nbs’ Shabbos mode be used on Shabbos?

In table below, three methods have been described – the colour coding indicates the relative halachic status of each method.

	OPENING THE DOOR WHEN ELEMENT IS ON	ONE DOOR OPENING	MULTIPLE DOOR OPENINGS
USAGE INSTRUCTION	The door is opened only when the element indicator light is displayed	Food is all removed from the oven in one door opening session	The door is opened and closed repeatedly even though the element may not be functioning
NOTE	This is the advised halachic approach	This approach mitigates some halachic concern	There are serious halachic concerns with using the appliance in this way.
DRAWBACKS	Many ovens are manufactured without an indicator light. FedTech are working to provide a service which will facilitate installing these lights	Householder would like to keep food warmed for both Friday night and Shabbos lunch	Halachic question



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An element indicator installed in the home of a Bosch Sabbath mode oven owner

What are your instructions for heating food in a Neff ‘Sabbath mode oven’?

- Here are our guidelines for use of the NEFF oven in ‘Sabbath mode’.
- All food must be fully cooked and in place in the oven before Shabbos
 - NO FOOD whether raw or cooked, hot or cold may be PLACED in the oven on Shabbos
 - The temperature can be set before Shabbos to ANY level (the manufacturers have limited this to below 140 degrees)
 - Food which is left in the oven over Shabbos MAY be removed during Shabbos as in the above table in one of two ways
 - In ovens which carry an element indicator light, the door should only be opened when the light is ‘on’. An oven which has an indicator light may be opened and closed repeatedly when the light indicates that the element is working
 - In the absence of an element indicator light, ALL food MUST be removed before the oven door can be closed again.

Are the guidelines for Yom Tov use different than those for that of Shabbos?

As indirect activity is viewed more leniently on Yom Tov, many Rabbonim permit opening a thermostatically controlled oven freely. If an element indicator light is present, it is still better to open the oven only when the indicator light is switched on.

Regarding use of the NEFF ovens on Yom Tov, our guidelines are as follows:

- The oven should be set to the desired temperature in Sabbath mode before Yom Tov
- No adjustments may be made to the temperature setting during Yom Tov
- Food may be placed in the oven to cook or heat on yom tov and need not be in place from before yom tov
- The door may be opened and closed as is required during cooking. It should not be opened for no reason.

In Part 4 next week:
How to know whether other Sabbath mode ovens can be used on Shabbos, and the use of non-Sabbath mode ovens on Shabbos.

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Rabbi Y M Guttentag, Rabbinic Coordinator - KF Kosher

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IS YOUR OVEN SHABBOS COMPLIANT? (PART 4)

Last week we discussed the use of ovens manufactured by NEFF, Bosch and Siemens. In this fourth and final column of the current series, we will clarify how the householder can evaluate whether Sabbath modes from other companies can be used on Shabbos. We will also look at the use of ovens which do not offer a Sabbath mode. This week's column will also recap on some of the points discussed in the previous sections, providing an easy to use checklist and summary.

How can I check whether my oven's Shabbos mode can be used on Shabbos?

To enable use on Shabbos, two core issues must be considered and resolved:

1. Does opening the oven's door trigger its activity? This may be the case even in "Sabbath mode"
2. Does the introduction of cold air to the appliance controlled by a thermostat create a reaction to heat the oven sooner that it would otherwise have done?

In the check list below, we have summarised the issues and how to resolve them.

Can I use an oven which does not have a Sabbath mode?

As the reader will have discovered, the presence of a Sabbath mode does not guarantee that an oven can be used on Shabbos. Similarly, lack of a Sabbath mode does not mean that an appliance can not be used. The check list below can be used to ascertain whether an appliance is fit for Shabbos use.

I have checked my oven and opening the door triggers the light. I can't seem to unscrew the bulb?

Although in some ovens these switches have been hidden, in many cases a small but visible switch is pressed when the door closes. Taping down or even stuffing up this switch before Shabbos would resolve all direct door related activity.

What advice can you offer someone looking to purchase a Shabbos compliant oven?

The surest way to buy a halachically compliant oven, is with the advice of a frum appliance retailer who is aware of the relevant halachic issues (It is a great *mitzvah* to support your local community businesses). You can also ask friends and neighbours for their experiences. Swapping stories will mean you can learn from other people's mistakes!

As always, if you email us with enquiries about specific products we can try to help, and as our pool of information grows we will be better placed to offer help in this area. Please email all such queries to technology@federation.org.uk and we will try to provide assistance where possible.

What else should I be aware of regarding using an oven on Shabbos?

It is imperative that when using ovens on Shabbos, members of the public are aware that food may not be inserted into the oven on Shabbos. Look out for our next series of columns on how to keep food hot in an oven over Shabbos, and the possibilities for heating cold dry food during Shabbos itself.

THE USE OF OVENS ON SHABBOS - A SUMMARY AND CHECKLIST

Direct door related activity	Thermostatic control of the oven
Does the light turn on/off when the door is opened/closed?	Does the appliance have a programmable timer which can be set to cease all appliance activity?
Do icons appear/disappear when the door is opened/closed?	Once the timed programme has finished, does the alarm deactivate automatically (without the need for pressing of buttons)?
Does the fan start/stop when the door is opened/closed?	Does the appliance display an icon when the heating element is active?
Is the heating element activated/deactivated when the door is opened/closed? (Can be tested by looking at your house power meter as the door is opened)	If your appliance has an element indicator, the door may be opened when the element light is on.
At the end of a timed cooking programme, are alarms deactivated by opening the door	If your appliance does not have an element indicator it may be possible to install one.
Can you find the door switch and tape it down?	FedTech are working to provide a service which will facilitate the installation of element indicator lights
Can a magnet be placed in front of the magnetic door contact switch to trick the oven into thinking it is closed	On Yom Tov one may open the door even if doing so may cause the element to activate sooner

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