

Doorbuster

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Q My son was climbing on the fridge door on Shabbos night and the fridge began to tip over. My wife put herself in front of it to protect our son and began screaming. I ran over and lifted the fridge off her, but the door was mostly off. Not thinking carefully, I reattached the door without considering that it might be a problem. Was this repair permitted?



A The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 314) says that a *kli shel prakim* (a utensil with multiple segments) that came apart may be put back together loosely, but not tightly, on Shabbos. The Biur Halacha suggests two possible standards for the permitted “loose” repair: a) the detached part is not secured in place, and there is still play at the joint following the repair, or b) “loose” just means that the repair requires no particular strength or skill. But this repair is forbidden for a different reason. A refrigerator is quite large and usually holds 40 *se’ah* (approximately 20 cubic feet). A utensil larger than 40 *se’ah* is considered connected to the ground and lacks the status of a utensil, so even a loose repair would be forbidden Biblically as *boneh* (construction on Shabbos).

Ex post facto, is it permitted to use the repaired fridge? It is forbidden to benefit from a *ma’asei* Shabbos (an activity prohibited on Shabbos). Had the door been left off, the fridge would have been open all Shabbos. Perhaps, then, one should be permitted to open the fridge, because doing so just returns it to its pre-*melacha* state, which would not be considered benefiting from the *melacha*. (

On the other hand, perhaps we ought to focus on the door itself and say that because the door was improperly replaced, one may not use the door. An additional angle to consider is that perhaps the transgression is

considered shogeg, since you were panicked and did not consider carefully whether the action was forbidden. In the case of an issur d'Oraisa performed beshogeg, the Mishnah Berurah is lenient bish'as hadchak (in a case of pressing need) about benefiting from the melacha.