



Housing Fact Sheets

Appliances

Appliances account for about 20% of your household's energy consumption, with refrigerators, clothes washers, and clothes dryers at the top of the consumption list.

When you're shopping for appliances, think of two price tags. The first one covers the purchase price—think of it as a down payment. The second price tag is the cost of operating the appliance during its lifetime. You'll be paying on that second price tag every month with your utility bill for the next 10 to 20 years, depending on the appliance. Refrigerators last an average of 20 years; room air conditioners and dishwashers, about 10 years each; clothes washers, about 14 years.

ENERGY STAR

When you do have to shop for a new appliance, look for the ENERGY STAR label. Only products that exceed minimum federal energy efficiency standards by a substantial amount can be labeled with the ENERGY STAR. The appliance shopping guide at:

http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/tips/shopping_guide.html lists some of the major appliances that carry the ENERGY STAR label and provides helpful information on what to look for when shopping for an appliance.

EnergyGuide

Don't confuse the blue ENERGY STAR label with the yellow and black EnergyGuide label. The federal government requires most appliances to display the bright yellow and black EnergyGuide label to help consumers determine how energy efficient an appliance is. Although these labels will not tell you which appliance is the most efficient, they will tell you the annual energy consumption and operating cost for each appliance so you can compare them yourself.



Figure 1: ENERGY STAR certification label

Since 1980 the Federal Trade Commission has required EnergyGuide labels on refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers, room air conditioners, water heaters, furnaces, boilers, central air conditioners, heat pumps and pool heaters. The EnergyGuide label allows consumers to compare the efficiency of various brands and models when shopping for a new appliance. See box below for more information about how to read the EnergyGuide label.

How to Read The Energy Guide Label

Manufacturer, model number and appliance type

- Information about features, capacity, and size so you can compare brands
- Estimate of appliance's annual energy use. The lower the number, the more energy efficient the appliance, and the less it costs to run it.
- If the appliance is an ENERGY STAR appliance the ENERGY STAR symbol will appear on the ENERGYGUIDE label
- The range of energy use for similar models. Use this scale to see how a particular model measures up to the competition.
- Estimate of how much it can cost to run this model for a year. Note that the estimated yearly operating cost is based on the national average cost of electricity (\$0.0824 per kWh).



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