



# E-Conservation

power to control what you spend

## What About the Water Heater?

### Water Heating

Water heating is the third largest energy expense in your home, after heating and cooling; it can account for 15–25 percent of your utility bill. It's not hard to see why: a family of four, each taking a 5-minute shower a day under inefficient showerheads, can use 700 gallons of water in a week—enough for a 3-year supply of drinking water for one person! There are several ways to cut down the amount you spend on heating water: insulating your water heater and pipes; reducing the amount of hot water you use; and turning down the thermostat on your water heater.

You will want a water heater large enough to provide hot water during the household's busiest times of the day. Consider the size of your family: a home with two adults may use a maximum of 30 gallons of hot water in an hour, whereas a family of six may need 70 gallons an hour. Too small a water heater won't keep up with your family's hot water demands—but too large a water heater will increase the standby losses (the amount of heat the water heater loses as it stands waiting to be used) in some models.

### Where Should the Water Heater be Located?

If building a new home, try to have the water heater centrally located, relative to high water use areas like bathrooms, laundry, and kitchen. This will mean a shorter pipe “run” with less loss of heat through pipe walls, and hotter water arriving at the tap.

### How Do I Find an Energy Efficient Water Heater?

If you are in the market for a new water heater, first check the U.S. Department of Energy's website [http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your\\_home/water\\_heating/index.cfm/mytopic=12810](http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/water_heating/index.cfm/mytopic=12810) for information from energy efficiency to fuel type and availability. Also, check with your utility company as they may offer rebates or incentives for certain types of energy efficient water heaters. Keep in mind that your choice of water heater and its fuel source will depend, in part, on where you live and the space available.

As always when shopping for energy efficient appliances, keep in mind *your* needs for hot water, also, when shopping for a new water heater—and don't forget to take into account water conservation measures, such as low-flow showerheads.

This publication was adapted from The University of Florida, NASULGC/DOE Building Science Community of Practice, Frequently Asked Questions, 3/6/07.



*DISCLAIMER – This piece is intended to give the reader only general factual information current at the time of publication. This piece is **not** a substitute for professional advice and should not be used for guidance or decisions related to a specific design or construction project. This piece is not intended to reflect the opinion of any of the entities, agencies or organizations identified in the materials and, if any opinions appear, are those of the individual author and should not be relied upon in any event.*