Just the Facts About ...

Appliance Shopping

Energy Wise Homes

When shopping for new home appliances, there is more to consider than price, color and features. The cost of operating an appliance over time, and the effect the appliance will have on the environment, is largely determined by its energy consumption. Fortunately, the federal government has made it fairly easy to evaluate the energy use of new appliances. The "EnergyGuide" label and the ENERGY STAR label help you to identify the most efficient products.

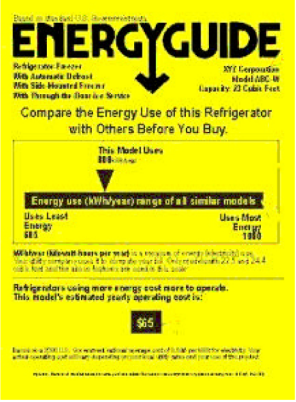
Energy Guide Labels

The following information is provided by the U.S. Department of Energy:

The U.S. Government established a mandatory compliance program in the 1970s requiring that certain types of new appliances bear a label to help consumers compare the energy efficiency among similar products. In 1980, the Federal Trade Commission's Appliance Labeling Rule became effective, and requires that EnergyGuide labels be placed on all of the following new appliances:

- Refrigerators
- Freezers
- Water heaters
- Dishwashers
- Clothes washers
- Room air conditioners
- Heat pumps
- Furnaces
- Boilers

These labels are bright yellow with black lettering identifying energy consumption characteristics of household appliances. 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.



EnergyGuide labels show the estimated yearly electricity consumption to operate the product along with a scale for comparison among similar products. The comparison scale shows the least and most energy used by comparable models. The labeled model is represented by an arrow pointing to its relative position on that scale. This allows consumers to compare the labeled model with other similar models. The consumption figure printed on EnergyGuide labels, in kilowatt-hours (kWh), is based on average usage assumptions, and your actual energy consumption may vary depending on the appliance usage.

EnergyGuide labels are not required on the following appliances:

- Kitchen ranges
- Microwave ovens
- Clothes dryers
- On-demand water heaters
- Portable space heaters
- Lights

ENERGY STAR Labels

The ENERGY STAR program is a cooperative effort of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy. ENERGY STAR promotes the use of energy efficient appliances in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that cause global climate change. Only products that rank very high in terms of energy efficiency receive the ENERGY STAR label.

The ENERGY STAR program has expanded to include the following consumer goods:

- Appliances
- Heating and cooling equipment
- Consumer electronics
- Home office equipment
- Windows
- Lighting
- Water coolers
- Dehumidifiers
- Ventilating fans

According to the U.S. DOE: ENERGY STAR gives consumers energy-efficient choices on products that meet guidelines set by the U.S. EPA and the U.S. DOE. The ENERGY STAR program is an active partnership between consumers, manufacturers, retailers, and other industry partners, united by a common goal: to help protect our environment for future generations by changing to more energy-efficient practices today.

If all consumers, businesses, and organizations in the United States made their product choices and building improvement decisions with ENERGY STAR over the next decade, the national annual energy bill would be reduced by about 200 billion dollars. With that would come a sizable contribution to reducing air pollution and protecting the earth's climate. With ENERGY STAR, money isn't all you're saving.

Learn More

Visit www.energystar.gov or call 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937).

Maryland Tax Break

You do not need to pay state sales and use tax on the purchase of the following household appliances. This means that you effectively save five percent of the sale price.

Appliance	Special Requirements	Date Purchased
clothes washer	ENERGY STAR label	before 7/1/03
room air conditioner	ENERGY STAR label	before 7/1/04
refrigerator - standard size	ENERGY STAR label	before 7/1/04
natural gas heat pump	C.O.P. (coefficient of performance) of 1.25 for heating,70 for cooling	before 7/1/04
electric heat pump hot water heater	energy factor of at least 1.7	before 7/1/04
electric heat pump	heating system performance factor of at least 7.5 and a cooling seasonal energy efficiency ratio of at least 13.5	before 7/1/04
central air conditioner	cooling seasonal energy efficiency ratio of at least 13.5	before 7/1/04
natural gas water heater - advanced	energy efficiency factor of at least 0.65	before 7/1/04
fuel cell	generates electricity and heat using an electrochemical process, has an electric-only generation efficiency greater than 35%, and has a generating capacity of at least 2 kilowatts	before 7/1/04

For more information:

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