



How to Chose and Purchase a Water Heater

Rather than be faced with making an emergency purchase to replace your water heater, this bulletin may help you become skilled at what your options are. You could save a lot of money in up front costs as well as lifetime operation if you consider energy efficiency, type, and installation before you buy.

Here is one way to proceed when purchasing a water heater:

1. Think about your hot water needs. What capacity will you need? Are there any special considerations like a large garden tub? Conduct a residential sizing using our FaxBack document #1204.
2. What is the most efficient unit for you? How much will it cost to buy and operate? Your 'up-front' costs will include the purchase of the water heater and the cost to install the unit. After that, there are 'sustainment costs'. These include periodic maintenance and monthly fuel or energy costs, etc. Determine the water heater's efficiency - look for its Energy Factor. The higher the number, the better the fuel efficiency.
3. Select your energy source – Gas or Electric? This may already be a given because of the type of unit you currently have installed. If so, then make sure you compare prices and product efficiencies based on the same fuel type. Gas prices and efficiency are not the same as electric prices and efficiency.
4. There is an Energy Guide label on each water heater in the store. The Energy Guide is mandated by the government to help consumers make smart purchasing decisions without being confused by the product advertisements. THIS is the document that you can use to compare like products to like products. See FaxBack document # 1215 for an explanation of the contents of the Energy Guide label. Check the first-hour rating for each unit that you care considering buying. This tells you how much hot water the unit can deliver before it goes cold. Do not buy a tank that puts out more than you will need or you are just wasting money. It also tells you the estimated annual operating cost of using the system based on an average national fuel price.
5. Also shop for the warranty. A longer warranty usually means a higher price; but it also usually mean a higher quality product. If the manufacture's warranty lasts for ten years, then you can be assured they are building the unit with the quality to last for ten years. Another thing to keep in mind is that Rheem's warranties apply to the tank – not the owner. If you move into a home with a Rheem product, and the product is still in warranty, then Rheem honors the warranty even though you were not the original owner.
6. Two other FaxBack documents that will be helpful are our specification sheet documents that have the residential gas or electric products – and their specifications. For gas products order document number 2101; for electric products order document number 2130.

The chart on the next page will help you organize your purchasing thoughts.



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The first line entry is an example how to use the chart.

Model Number	Gallon Capacity	First Hour Rating	Energy Factor	Energy Source	Tank Warranty	Parts Warranty	Price	Annual Operating Costs
<i>RHEPRO 52-2 Rheem</i>	<i>50 gallons</i>	<i>67 gallons</i>	<i>.94</i>	<i>Elec</i>	<i>6 years</i>	<i>6 years</i>	<i>\$000.00</i>	<i>\$402</i>