

California Appliance Efficiency Database for Consumers



A Great Resource to Help You Save Energy—and Money

The California Energy Commission's online Appliance Efficiency Database (www.appliances.energy.ca.gov) is a great resource filled with information about the energy and water efficiency of products you use every day.

For example:

- Would you like to compare two dishwashers to find out which one will save you the most money on your energy bills, based on energy efficiency? You can look it up in the database.
- Thinking about a new portable electric spa and want to know which model consumes the least electricity? You can check the database.
- Are you replacing your central heating and air conditioning system and wondering if the model recommended is the best choice for lowering your utility bills? The database provides you with the information.

With the rising cost of electricity and water, the cost of an appliance—a broad term we use to describe many products that use electricity, gas, or water—has a lot to do with how efficient it is. For example, a \$650 refrigerator that will add \$600 to your electricity bill over its average 13-year life becomes a \$1,250 refrigerator. On the other hand, even a \$700 refrigerator with a lifetime energy cost of \$200 becomes a \$900 refrigerator. So if you buy the less expensive of these two models, you're actually spending \$350 to save \$50. In fact, the sticker price of an efficient appliance can be the same or less than an inefficient one, meaning that with a little shopping you can win both ways.

What do you mean by appliances?

The law covers several products that use electricity or water, including:

- Air conditioners, heaters, and fans
- Clothes washers and dryers
- Dishwashers
- Lighting products
- Plumbing fittings and fixtures
- Pool and spa equipment
- Refrigerators, refrigerator-freezers, and freezers
- Televisions and consumer audio and video equipment
- Water heaters

Why did the California Energy Commission create the Appliance Efficiency Database?

California has tough efficiency standards for appliances. Since 1976, California law* has required that certain appliances meet efficiency standards, which means that each appliance must be tested and the results certified to the State before it can be sold. Once its appliance efficiency data is certified, it's listed in the Appliance Efficiency Database with its efficiency rating. So when you find a product in the database, you know it complies with California's appliance efficiency regulations. In other words, if it's listed, it's legal.

Why does appliance efficiency matter?

It's great for your wallet and good for California. The Energy Commission's Appliance Efficiency program has helped California keep the amount of energy each person consumes at about the same level for more than 35 years, while Americans living elsewhere consume about 60 percent more electricity per person than they did in the 1970s. That's good news, but because California's population has grown, electricity use has nearly doubled. Likewise, the increased demand for water makes conservation a must in our drought-prone state.

How do I use the Appliance Efficiency Database?

You can search the database at www.appliances.energy.ca.gov. When you do, you'll see that the database is organized by product types and how consumption is measured for each type. For example, refrigerators are rated by annual energy use in kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. Most residential air conditioners are rated by their seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER)—the higher the SEER, the more efficient it is. And a water heater's energy factor determines its efficiency, so look for the water heater with the highest energy factor. Every type of product listed has its own way of being measured for efficiency.

What if I have questions?

We're here to help. Just send us an email at appliances@energy.state.ca.us.

*California Code of Regulations, Title 20, Sections 1601-1609.