

## No More Supersizing with the Use of Tankless Water Heaters

In greening our homes, part of creating a more energy-efficient environment can be done by using a tankless water heater. Sources say that conventional tank water heaters create up to 30% of energy costs for many households. With Pennsylvania energy rates expected to climb after deregulation in 2010, it's an expense to take notice of in the effort to ensure an adequate supply of hot water to meet household demands. In making the right choice as to whether or not to go tankless, it pays to do your research and be clear on your household water output as well as the life cycle considerations and costs involved.

Tankless water heaters have been proven beneficial to homeowners in the following ways:

- They are available to homes that use both natural gas and electric to heat their water.
- It heats on-demand, meaning it heats only the amount of water that you use. Once you turn on your faucet, it activates the heating process and provides a constant supply of hot water for the amount you're going to use. That process cuts down the amount of energy that is used to heat the water, which can therefore reduce your energy costs. It basically eliminates the extra cost of keeping 40 to 50 gallons of water hot in a storage tank.
- The efficiency level of a tankless water heater prevents "standby losses," which is when heat is still conducted and radiated from the walls of the tank without any water being in it. Conventional tanks are known for doing that because they're designed to periodically produce heat to keep the water temperature hot, regardless of whether you're currently using that amount of heated water. Also, it continues to heat when there's no water in the tank allowing the heat to escape through the flue pipes; you're still paying for the heat that was created.
- Tankless water heaters use less energy than units with tanks, which can save a typical family about \$100 or more per year on energy costs.
- A tankless water heater doesn't take up much room, so storage room isn't a big concern. Since there is no tank to worry about, you also won't have to deal with coming home and finding that your conventional water heater tank has sprung a leak.
- Some tankless water heaters qualify for a Federal tax deduction of up to \$300.

Here are some factors to consider before you buy:

- It costs more upfront to purchase a tankless heater.
- Smaller units aren't equipped to produce enough hot water to serve multiple functions at once. They heat water for only one faucet at a time. You'll have to consider a larger unit which can handle the demand of dishwashers, washers, and showers running simultaneously or a point-of-use unit for an area near your kitchen or master bathroom. Consider the long-term costs as a conventional heater costs more to operate and typically lasts for 10 years versus a tankless heater that is cheaper to maintain and lasts twice as long as a tank.

The key is to choose a model that can heat the maximum amount of hot water you use at peak times. Start by listing the number of hot water devices you expect to have open at any one time and add up their flow rates. Choose the model that is closest to your needs in the areas of running faucets, bathing/showering, laundry, dish washing, and other household uses.

Saving on energy costs is high priority for homeowners. But take the time to be informed...it's the best way to make the right decision.