

Hot Water

Why we care

Heating water for your home is the second biggest contributor of carbon emissions after space heating. Because 20 percent of carbon emissions come from homes, reducing energy for hot water can make a positive environmental impact, and it will save you money.

Simple, positive change

First steps

- Set your water heater at 120° (or "medium").
- Wrap insulation around your water heater if it's older than 15 years and in an unheated space. Wrap the first 4 feet of pipes leading from the heater.
- Turn off the heater if you will be away for two days. Simply flip off the circuit breaker for electric water heaters; set gas water heaters to "vacation."
- Assure that you have a low-flow shower head (less than 2 ½ quarts of water in 15 seconds).

Lifestyle changes

- Reduce a 10-minute shower to 5 minutes to save more electricity than almost any other lifestyle change.
- Reduce number of loads of laundry and set washing machine temperature at "warm" or "cold" for wash and "cold" for rinse.

Technological solutions

- Replace a conventional washing machine with an Energy Star front-loading model.
- Install a solar hot water system. See <http://www.solaroregon.org/learn/solar-site-analysis/siting-solar-hot-water> and <http://www.oregonlive.com/home-garden/index.ssf/green-living/10-things-you-should-know-about-solar-hotwater-sys.html>.
- Replace an old water heater with an on-demand (tankless) heater or a heat-pump water heater. Each uses about 30 percent less energy and is eligible for tax credits. See http://www.portlandtribune.com/sustainable/story.php?story_id=124456517223098700

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