

Florence Energy News

TIPS FOR CONSERVING HOT WATER

You can lower your water heating costs by using and wasting less hot water in your home. To conserve hot water, you can fix leaks, install low-flow fixtures, and purchase an energy-efficient dishwasher and clothes washer.

FIX LEAKS

You can significantly reduce hot water use by simply repairing leaks in fixtures, faucets, showerheads, or pipes. A leak of one drip per second can cost \$1 per month. Also, if your water heater's tank leaks, you need a new water heater.



INSTALL LOW-FLOW FIXTURES

Federal regulations mandate that new showerhead flow rates can not exceed more than 2.5 gallons per minute (gpm) at a water pressure of 80 pounds per square inch (psi). New faucet flow rates can not exceed 2.5 gpm at 80 psi or 2.2 gpm at 60 psi. You can purchase some quality, low-flow fixtures for around \$10 to \$20 a piece and achieve water savings of 25 - 60%.

SHOWERHEADS

For maximum water efficiency, select a showerhead with a flow rate of less than 2.5 gpm. There are two basic types of low-flow showerheads aerating and laminar-flow. Aerating showerheads mix air with water, forming a misty spray. Laminar-flow showerheads form individual streams of water. If you live in a humid climate, you might want to use a laminar-flow showerhead because it will not create as much steam and moisture as an aerating one.

Before 1992, some showerheads have flow rates of 5.5 gpm. Therefore, if you had fixtures that pre-date 1992, you might want to replace them if you are not sure of their flow rates.

FAUCETS

The aerator, the screw-on tip of the faucet, ultimately determines the maximum flow rate of a faucet. Typically, new kitchen faucets come equipped with aerators that restrict flow rates to 2.2 gpm, while new bathroom faucets have ones that restrict flow rates from 1.5 to 0.5 gpm.

Aerators are inexpensive to replace and they can be one of the most cost-effective water conservation measures. For maximum water efficiency, purchase aerators that have flow rates of no more than 1.0 gpm. Some aerators even come with shut-off valves that allow you to stop the flow of water without affecting the temperature.

DISHWASHERS

It is commonly assumed that washing dishes by hand saves hot water. However, washing dishes by hand several times a day can be more expensive than operating an energy-efficient dishwasher. You can consume less energy with an energy-efficient dishwasher when properly used and when only operating it with full loads.



When purchasing a new dishwasher, check the EnergyGuide label to see how much energy it uses. Dishwashers fall into one of two categories: compact capacity and standard capacity. Although compact-capacity dishwashers may appear to be more energy efficient on the EnergyGuide label, they hold fewer dishes, which may force you to use it more frequently. In this case, your energy costs could be higher than with a standard-capacity dishwasher.

One feature that makes a dishwasher more energy efficient is a booster heater. A booster heater increases the temperature of the water entering the dishwasher to the 140° F recommended for cleaning.

Some dishwashers have built-in boosters, while others require manual selection before the wash cycle begins. Some also only activate the booster during the heavy-duty cycle. Dishwashers with booster heaters typically cost more, but they pay for themselves with energy savings in about 1 year if you also lower the water temperature on your water heater.

Another dishwasher feature that reduces hot water use is the availability of cycle selections. Shorter cycles require less water, thereby reducing energy cost. If you want to ensure that your new dishwasher is energy efficient, purchase one with an ENERGY STAR label.

CLOTHES WASHERS

Unlike dishwashers, clothes washers do not require a minimum temperature for optimum cleaning. Therefore, to reduce energy costs, you can use either cold or warm water for most laundry loads. Cold water is always sufficient for rinsing. Inefficient clothes washers can cost three times as much to operate than energy-efficient ones. Select a new machine that allows you to adjust the water temperature and levels for different loads. Efficient clothes washers spin-dry your clothes more effectively too, saving energy when drying as well. Also, front-loading machines use less water, and less energy than top loaders.

Small-capacity clothes washers often have better EnergyGuide label ratings. However, a reduced capacity might increase the number of loads you need to run, which could increase your energy costs. If you want to ensure that your new clothes washer is energy efficient, purchase one with an ENERGY STAR label. If you have energy efficiency questions, call Florence Utilities at (256) 740-6058 or visit www.energy.gov.



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NATURAL GAS WATER HEATER FAQs



- Q:** Why should I consider a natural gas hot water heater?
- A:** Natural gas remains an economical energy source to meet your hot water needs. When compared on equal terms with other energy sources, natural gas is the economical choice. Based on an energy equivalent of 1,000,000 BTU, you can make the following comparisons:
- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|-----|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Propane | \$25.94* | per | 1,000,000 | BTU |
| | | | | (79% higher than natural gas) |
| Electricity | \$20.62* | per | 1,000,000 | BTU |
| | | | | (42% higher than natural gas) |
| Natural Gas | \$14.39* | per | 1,000,000 | BTU |
| | | | | (*as of 8/1/2007) |
- Q:** Are electric water heaters more energy efficient?
- A:** Electric water heaters use energy more efficiently, but natural gas water heaters are more economical to operate. The reason is that gas water heaters lose energy through the required vent. However, because electricity and propane cost more, the annual operational cost with natural gas is less.
- Q:** What are some other advantages to using natural gas for my hot water needs?
- A:** Natural gas water heaters have a quicker recovery time, which means you have hot water available much faster, and since natural gas water heaters do not require electricity to operate, you have hot water even when the power is off.
- Q:** Are the new tankless natural gas water heaters more efficient than conventional natural gas tank water heaters?
- A:** Yes. Tankless natural gas water heaters have an "Energy Factor" of 0.80 and above, and they provide instant hot water only on demand and use natural gas only when the hot water is needed.

For more information contact Randy Fannin at the City of Florence Gas Department (256) 767-3430

September-October Calendar of Events

Sept. 14 - 16

Trail of Tears Commemorative Motorcycle Ride - 14th Annual

Main Ride - September 15

Location: Ride ends at Waterloo
Hours: Various
Contact: 764-3237
www.al-tn-trailoftears.net

October 2-29

Shoals Artists Guild Exhibit

Location: Kennedy Douglass Center
Hours: 9 am - 4 pm Monday - Friday
Admission: Free
Contact: 760-6379

October 27-28

Alabama Renaissance Faire

Location: Wilson Park
Hours: 10 am - 6 pm Sat.
Noon - 6 pm Sun.
Admission: Free
Contact: 768-3031
www.alarenfaire.org



The public is invited to attend the

FLORENCE STATE OF THE CITY Coming this Fall

Watch for more details

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Florence ENERGY

NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM FLORENCE UTILITIES

Natural gas water heaters are safe and energy efficient. Today's natural gas water heaters represent an extraordinary value in performance, reliability, and operating costs. Frequently asked questions and answers are listed in this issue for your review.

You can lower your water heating costs by using and wasting less hot water in your home. To conserve hot water, you can fix leaks, install low-flow fixtures, and purchase an energy-efficient dishwasher and clothes washer. To learn more about energy efficiency check out the article inside or contact Florence Utilities at (256) 740-6058.

Held in downtown Wilson Park the official Alabama Renaissance Faire has developed into a major tourist event in Northwest Alabama. For the past four years it has been named one of the top 20 events in the southeast by the Southeast Tourist Society. Dates and details about this popular event are listed in the Calendar of Events section.

www.florenceutilities.com