

Tank or Tankless?

The FACTS About Tankless Water Heaters

The discussion of energy efficiency often leads to a discussion of tank vs. tankless water heaters. As you can imagine, there are pros and cons with each. Tankless heaters are about the size of a briefcase and heat water rapidly. In other words, they don't store hot water, but make it as it passes through the heat exchanger. This is what leads to many claims of savings. But what are the facts? Here is the REAL story.

CLAIM:

Huge
Dollar
Savings

FACTS:

- Tankless heaters can cost much more than standard tank-type heaters
- Installation requires larger wire or more wiring
 - #2 copper wire vs. #10 copper for a standard tank heater
 - Some models require three 40 amp circuits with #8 wire
- Tankless heaters may require an upgrade to the electric service
- Tankless heaters have a significant increase on demand during peak periods which can increase co-op wholesale costs and thereby consumer rates
- Tankless heaters do not have standby tank losses, but a highly insulated tank water heater such as Marathon only have standby losses of \$20-30 per year

CLAIM:

Last
Longer

FACTS:

- Tankless heaters need very pure water or they may prematurely fail
- Mineral deposits can reduce flow rates and efficiency in tankless heaters
- Mineral deposit failure is not covered by most tankless warranties
- Tankless heaters have specialized parts not readily available

CLAIM:

Endless
Supply of
Hot
Water

FACTS:

- "If you try running those while one is showering and another is brushing their teeth, not good."
- "It's very hard to keep the temp stable during a shower. It's up and down, you either freeze or burn when you first turn on the water. My tip is, let your water run for about 5 min. and maybe you won't look like a lobster."
- "My son and I installed this in my 3600 sq. ft. home--rather difficult to run 3 240 volt lines from breaker box to unit and a couple hundred bucks for wire, breakers, etc. Took us several hours. Unit does great, but we can't run our showers full speed, and only one person can shower at a time, and not when washing machine is filling up!"

The high cost of purchase, installing and maintaining a tankless heater far outweigh the modest energy savings. With climate change concerns, new power plants will be scarce, preserving the capacity we have is imperative. And on top of that, a tankless heater will not deliver all the hot water you need, when you want it!



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