

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

A Cost-Efficient Water Heater

(NAPSA)—Consider the everyday activities that use hot water—cleaning the dishes, washing clothes, hot showers. All of these activities put a heavy burden on a family's water heater—an appliance responsible for approximately 20 percent of a home's energy use. The Propane Education & Research Council (Council) offers tips for choosing the best water heater for a family's needs and how to maintain it for years of efficient use.

"A family of four, each showering five minutes a day, uses 700 gallons of water a week," said Roy Willis, president of the Propane Education & Research Council. "Choosing the right size water heater is crucial. If your tank is too small, you may suffer the agony of cold showers. If your tank is too large, you'll pay extra to keep unused water heated."

If your gas water heater was manufactured prior to 1992, it probably has an efficiency rating of less than 50 percent. When choosing a new water heater, you can save a lot of money over the lifetime of the heater if you consider energy efficiency and type before you buy. The Council recommends investigating your household's pattern of hot water usage. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What's the number of people in the family (one person uses an average of 34 to 35 gallons of hot water per day)?
- How many bathrooms, garden tubs or hot tubs?
- Do you have an automatic dishwasher? If so, how many times is it run on average per day?
- Do you have a washing machine? If so, how many times is it run on average per day?



Peak hour demand, the busiest one-hour usage period in a day, is key. How many family members will routinely take a shower in any given hour? Calculating usage correctly will help you choose what size water heater you need to maintain the necessary amount of hot water for your home.

Propane water heaters recover hot water nearly twice as quickly as electric water heaters—ensuring your home maintains a reliable supply of hot water. A 50-gallon propane water heater can provide as much hot water as a 66- to 80-gallon electric unit in a 2.5 bath home.

When researching water heaters, pay particular attention to the Energy Guide Label. This bright yellow sticker will tell you how much it will cost to run the water heater for one year. Propane water heaters cost a third less to operate than electric models.

For additional information about the benefits of using propane as a fuel source, visit the Council's web site at www.usepropane.com. While there, you can check out the Council's Energy Savings Calculator. By making a few selections on the calculator, you can quickly compare the cost of using propane water heaters and other gas appliances to the cost of using electric appliances.