

Water Heater Buying Guide

Looking for a new water heater? Trying to figure out the best water heater to buy? Maybe your current one is on its last legs or you've simply outgrown your old unit.



Avoid the cold water blues with the right water heater.

Chances are the technology, options and accessories for water heaters have changed since your last purchase. Use our handy guide on how to choose a water heater. AZ plumbing is happy to provide this buying guide on water heater information as a [service](#) to you.

Water Heater Types

The size of your family, the utilities in your area and the space available for your water heater all play a role in determining how to choose a water heater. Buy a water heater with the following information in mind:

Storage tank water heaters are the most common type and the best water heater to buy. These units have an insulated tank where water is heated and stored until it is needed. They are available in electric, liquid propane (LP) and natural gas models. Natural gas and LP water heaters normally use less energy and are less expensive to operate than electric models of the same size.



Storage tank water heaters are the most common type.

Water Heater Size Chart

People	Gallons
2	30-40
3	40
4	40-50
5 or more	50-80

Storage tank water heaters are designated by the amount of water they hold, in gallons. Tank size is one of the major considerations when purchasing one of these water heaters. If you intend to use a storage tank water heater, use our chart as a guide to finding the size you need.

Another consideration for storage tank water heaters is recovery rate — the number of gallons of water they can heat in an hour. The greater your demand for hot water, the higher recovery rate you need.

When you buy a water heater, look at the energy efficiency and yearly operating costs of a water heater before you decide which one is right for your needs. This information can be found on the [EnergyGuide](#) label.

Know the dimensions of the space where your water heater resides. If your hot water use increases and you need to upgrade to a larger tank size, it may be necessary to run plumbing to a different area so the new, larger unit will fit. One alternative to running new plumbing is to purchase a **low boy** or **shorty** water heater. These units are shorter and bigger around than a normal water heater, allowing them to hold the

same amount of water as their larger counterparts while still fitting in areas with limited headroom.

Small storage tank water heaters, known as **point of use, utility** or **mobile home** water heaters, are good choices for adding hot water to out buildings, shops or garages. Utility water heaters usually range in size from 2.5 to 19 gallons. The largest of these miniature units can also be used to provide hot water to secondary bathrooms that may be situated far from your home's main water heater.

Tankless or on-demand water heaters do not store hot water; rather they heat water as it passes through a series of coils in the unit. Since the unit only heats water as you use it, a tankless heater is usually more energy efficient than a traditional storage tank water heater. They are available in electric, LP and natural gas models. A tankless unit can provide an unlimited amount of hot water, but it can only provide a limited volume. Most tankless units can provide up to 3.5 gallons of heated water per minute. These units are a good choice for anyone whose demand doesn't typically call for hot water at more than two points at a time.



Tankless water heaters heat water as you need it.

Hot water dispensers are convenient point of use water heaters. They are great for making soups, sauces, oatmeal and other instant foods. These units provide 190° water instantly, so be careful when using them.



Hot water dispensers are great for making instant coffee or hot tea.

Accessories

There are many accessories available to improve safety and efficiency in your water heater.

· **Water heater stands** raise gas units off the ground and reduce the risk of fire in the event of a flammable liquid spill nearby.

· **Water heater pans** sit under the heater and collect water from leaks or overflows caused by excess pressure in the tank. The pan has an opening in the side for a drain hose to carry away any overflow water.

· **Water alarms** sit either on the floor or in the pan beside the water heater. If the heater leaks or overflows, the alarm will sense the liquid and give an audio alarm to alert the homeowner that there is a problem.

· **Tank expanders** are plumbed to the water heater. They are designed to hold the extra volume of water that can be produced when cold water is heated in the tank.

· **Pressure regulators** are connected to the outlet side of the water heater to keep the water pressure from exceeding a preset limit as it exits the tank. Regulating the pressure helps protect the interior pipes from leaking or bursting due to pressure surges in the plumbing system.

· **Timers** are wired into the unit's electrical supply and can be set so the water heater only draws electricity at specified times. Running the water heater only when needed cuts down on energy use and saves you money.

· **Insulating water heater blankets** are made especially to fit over the unit and reinforce the insulating ability of the water heater. Insulating blankets are best for heaters that reside in garages or other unheated spaces.