

Water Heaters

Heating water for your home can be expensive, accounting for up to 25 percent of your household's total energy costs. That is second only to the heating and cooling system. We want to help you trim these costs.

If you are installing a new water heater, we recommend an electric water heater, which can be more efficient than natural gas or propane. Look for an efficiency rating no lower than .90; the best available units range from .92 to .95.

The traditional water-heating system used in most homes is a storage tank heater. Usually a 50-gallon capacity is sufficient. Your co-op recommends a traditional water heater over the tankless, instant systems, which are costly to purchase and install. You can save on heating water by taking several easy steps:

- Reduce energy losses from your tank and pipes. Turn the water heater's thermostat down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, and insulate the tank with a water-heater blanket and the pipes with insulation. Adding insulation to the tank reduces heat losses by up to 45 percent, which can cut overall water-heating costs up to 10 percent. Pre-cut blankets are available at home-improvement stores for as little as \$20. Choose one with an insulating value of at least R-8. Insulate all accessible hot-water pipes, especially within 3 feet of the water heater, using pipe sleeves made with polyethylene or neoprene foam.

Approximate Savings: Hot-Water Retrofits

Retrofit	Electricity (kWh)
Reduce tank temperature	100-200
Exterior insulation blanket	150-450
Water-saving shower head	200-400

- Reduce use or waste of hot water. Install low-flow shower heads and faucet aerators to cut hot water consumption by as much as 25 percent. Use cold water for washing clothes whenever possible. Do not turn on the hot water at the sink unless you really need it. When you leave home for a vacation or an extended period, turn off the breaker to the water heater.

New heat-pump hot-water systems can lower water heating costs significantly. If you have a geothermal system, make sure you are using the water-heating capability of the system.

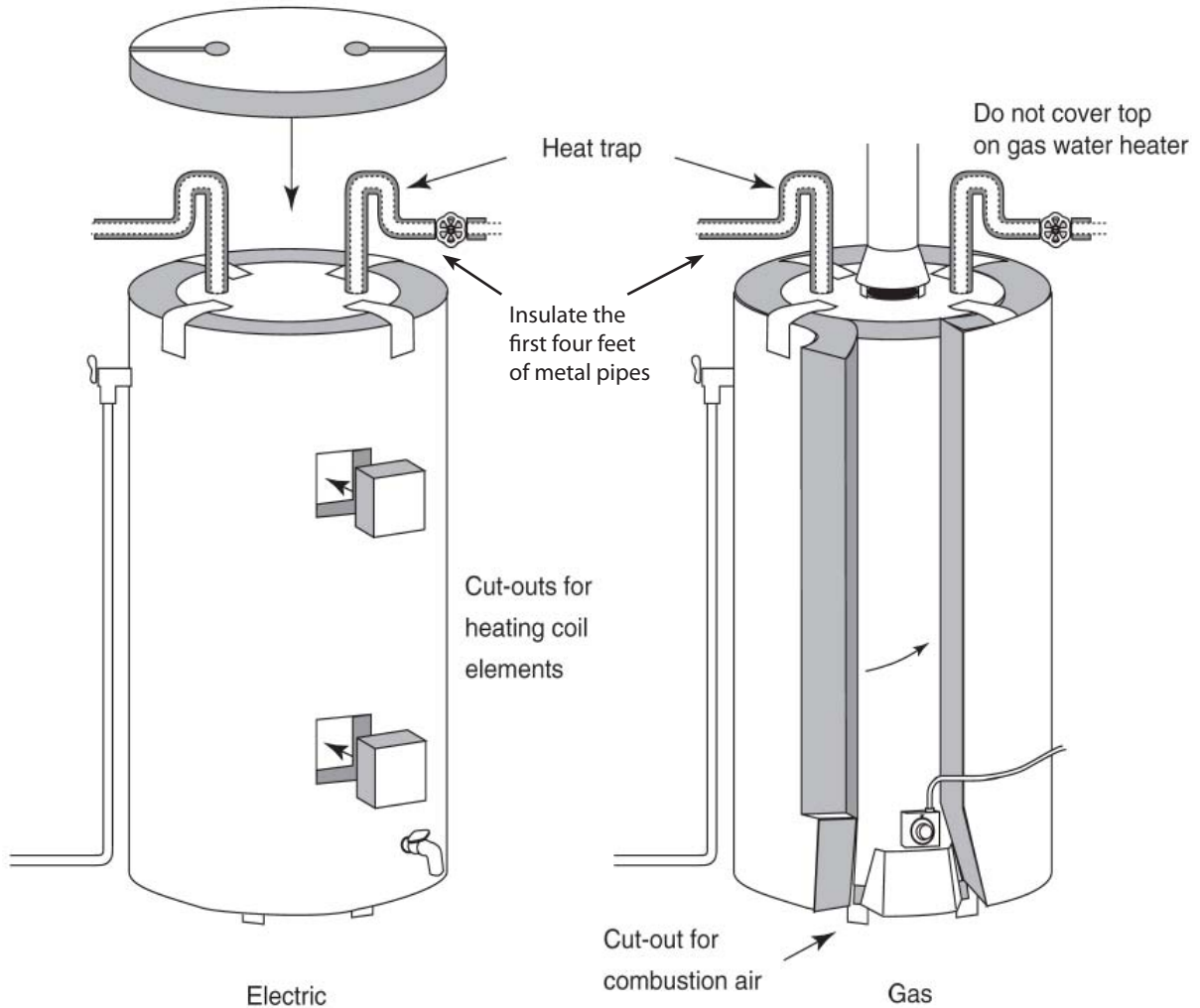
Finally, here's information about instant water heaters, which have no tank and heat water on demand. These units generally cost twice as much as traditional water heaters, and you will have to upgrade wiring or upgrade the

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electric service to your home to use them. In order to heat water instantly, the units cause a sharp spike in your home's electric demand. The positive news is that you aren't heating water round-the-clock. The units may be worth considering for vacation homes or buildings with limited use.

For further water-heating savings, make sure to look for the Energy Star label when you purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher.



Above are diagrams showing the installation of insulating jackets for electric and gas water heaters.