

## **Efficient Dishwashers Lower Energy Costs** *by Saskatchewan's Office of Energy Conservation*

What is the best way to wash dishes? Old-fashioned hand washing or an automatic dishwasher?

Although the jury is still out on that topic, the majority of Canadian households have already opted for the automatic option. If you are part of that majority, or are thinking of joining it, your choice of dishwasher can have a significant impact on the environment and energy demand.

Older dishwashers wasted a lot of hot water (and energy) to clean a load of dishes. Today's more efficient models consume up to 95% less energy than dishwashers used in the early 1970's. Some studies even show they can use less water, energy and soap than hand washing, depending on the hand washing methods used.

About 70 percent of Canadians buying dishwashers are now choosing an EnergyStar®-rated appliance, according to Natural Resources Canada. The EnergyStar® label identifies equipment with superior energy performance.

Today's EnergyStar®-qualifying dishwashers use a minimum of 25% less energy than the average new dishwasher. The best EnergyStar® dishwashers will cost you less than \$20 a year to operate at current energy prices.

Even within the EnergyStar®-qualifying group of appliances there are significant variations in energy consumption. Look for these additional energy performance features when shopping:

- Most dishwashers offer energy saving options such as short, light, or economy cycles. Make sure these features are available.
- About 80 percent of the energy required to operate a dishwasher is used to heat water. Since some models require twice as much water per cycle as others, ask your dealer about comparative water consumption, and select a unit that uses less water.
- Consider a model with a booster heater or sanitary setting that brings the temperature of the incoming water up to about 60°C/140°F, the recommended operating temperature for dishwashers. This allows you to reduce the temperature of your hot water tank to about 55°C/130°F, significantly reducing your overall water-heating costs.

You can compare the performance of models on the EnergyStar® website at <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/energystar/>.

To further lower energy costs for water heating, remember to add an inexpensive



PTRC Building

220 - 6 Research Dr.

Regina, SK

Canada S4S 7J7

Hotline: 1-800-668-4636

In Saskatoon: 933-6865

e-mail: [oeinfo@src.sk.ca](mailto:oeinfo@src.sk.ca)

and easy-to-install insulation kit on your water heater. A \$50 kit can cut energy use by \$50 a year. For additional advice on how to insulate your water heater as well as your water pipes, visit the Office of Energy Conservation web site - [www.oec.ca](http://www.oec.ca) - and search for water heater to find relevant articles.

Whatever dishwasher you have, there are a number of no- or low-cost operating practices that can reduce the appliance's energy consumption.

- Scrape off your dishes instead of rinsing them with hot water.
- Don't run the dishwasher until you have a full load. Make sure the contents are stacked carefully so you won't have to rewash them.
- Regularly clean the filter at the bottom of the dishwasher.
- Experiment with your dishwasher to determine which cycle best meets your needs. Short "econo" cycles often use less water (and energy) than heavy-duty cycles. Do not use a more powerful energy cycle than you need.
- If your dishwasher has a no-heat, air-dry feature, use it. This can reduce energy usage by half. If you have an older model without this feature, open the unit after the final rinse and air-dry the dishes.
- If your dishwasher is equipped with a "delay start" feature, use it to run your dishwasher during off-peak energy hours, such as mid-morning or late evening. And don't run the dishwasher during the hot hours of summer days. This will help keep your home cooler so that you can avoid the use of an air conditioner.
- If you have a small household, a more compact model that uses much less energy per load could meet your needs.

If you are one of the minority that still hand washes, reduce your use of hot water (and energy) by washing dishes by the sink full, not one at a time with the water running.