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Water Heater Replacement Options

It's a good idea to learn about your water heater options before yours breaks down and you have to rush to replace it. As it is the second-largest energy user in most homes, it's worth choosing a water heater carefully. To help you, here is a brief rundown of some types available.

Storage tank water heaters

The most common type, these hold water in a tank and keep it hot. Compare models for their Energy Factor (EF) listed on the energy label: the higher the EF, the more efficient it will be. Also look for an insulation R-value of 24 for more efficiency and lower operating cost. If an existing water heater is warm to the touch, adding a \$15 insulation blanket on the tank can save up to 45 percent of the heat loss and up to nine percent in water-heating costs. They range in size up to 80 gallons.

Tankless Water Heaters

These water heaters, also known as "demand" water heaters, eliminate the storage tank by heating water directly at its point of use when needed. They have virtually no heat loss but the electric type require significant energy when in use. Existing homes often need to upgrade their electrical systems, and at times a neighborhood transformer must be upgraded to handle the extra demand. Gas models are also available. Tankless water heaters often cannot heat more than one major appliance/shower at a time, and are best used to heat water for remote bathrooms, pool showers or spas.

Heat Pump Water Heaters

Their efficiency is two to three times higher than conventional electric storage water heaters. The difference is they use refrigerant fluid and compressors instead of electric resistance. Heat pump water heaters are available with built-in storage tanks, or as add-ons to existing hot water tanks and often do not require additional plumbing or penetrations into walls to replace storage water heaters. The best energy and cost savings are accomplished when they are used in warm climates. The initial extra cost over a storage water heater is usually recouped in the first 2-5 years of use.

Solar Water Heaters

These use energy from the sun to heat water. They typically serve as pre-heaters for conventional storage water heaters. Solar water heaters can save significant money and energy over the long term. While the initial cost of solar water heaters is significant, rebates, incentives and tax credits are often available through state and local governments and utilities, including JEA. For information check these websites: www.energystar.gov, www.irs.gov, [HYPERLINK "http://www.dep.state.fl.us/energy"](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/energy) www.dep.state.fl.us/energy and www.jea.com.

For more information visit the conservation section on jea.com, or contact us via e-mail at conservation@jea.com.