Electric hot water system* phase-out

Sustainable housing laws.

The facts

For the greener good.

From 1 January 2010, existing houses and townhouses (class 1 buildings) located in a reticulated natural gas area must install a greenhouse-efficient hot water system (gas, solar or heat pump) when the existing electric system* needs replacing. Homeowners do not need to replace existing hot water systems that are in good working order.

This requirement does not apply to homeowners in existing units (class 2 buildings).

Why was this initiative introduced?

This initiative was announced as part of the Queensland Government's ClimateSmart 2050 strategy in June 2007 to assist in meeting national greenhouse emissions reductions. It was the first initiative of its kind in Australia.

It is estimated this initiative will eliminate up to 7.4 million tonnes of greenhouse gas by 2020. This is the equivalent of taking up to 1.7 million cars off the road.

How will this benefit me?

Around 27 per cent of electricity used in the average Queensland household is for heating water—making hot water systems one of the highest single energy users and greenhouse gas contributors in the home. Replacing an electric hot water system with a greenhouse efficient system is one of the most effective ways to reduce your household's carbon footprint.

forthegreenergood.qld.gov.au
For the greener good.

Most greenhouse-efficient hot water systems have lower running costs than electric systems*. For example, having a solar hot water system can save up to 25 per cent annually on household electricity bills.

How is it regulated?

Regulations commenced on 1 January 2010 through the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code. The regulations prevent installers from replacing a hot water system with an electric hot water system* where the property is located within a reticulated natural gas area. This applies not only to existing electric systems, but also existing gas, heat pump and solar hot water systems.

What is a reticulated natural gas area?

This is an area where a gas distributor can install a connection from the gas pipeline network to the property boundary at no cost to the property owner. The property owner will still be responsible for the internal connection costs from the gas meter outlet to the hot water system if they decide to install a gas hot water system.

How do I know if my property is within a reticulated natural gas area?

You can find out if your property is within a reticulated natural gas area by using the web-based search tool located on the Department of Infrastructure and Planning's website www.dip.qld.gov.au

What if my property is outside a reticulated natural gas area?

Owners of homes located outside these areas are still able to replace their existing hot water system with another electric system* or voluntarily upgrade to a greenhouse-efficient system (gas, solar or heat pump).

What if I am replacing an existing electric hot water system* covered under warranty?

If you are replacing an existing electric system* that has failed and it is still covered for replacement under the manufacturer's warranty, you are permitted to install an electric system*.

*The phase out refers to electric resistance hot water systems only. An electric resistance hot water system is the most common form of electric hot water system. These systems were commonly installed in houses and townhouses built before 1 March 2006.

What are the requirements for new houses in Queensland?

Since 1 March 2006, all new houses and townhouses have been required to install a greenhouse-efficient hot water system.

What incentive programs are available for greenhouse efficient hot water systems?

Incentive programs are available to assist homeowners transition to greenhouse-efficient hot water systems. Information about these programs can be found at www.dip.qld.gov.au

What do I need to consider when changing to a greenhouse efficient hot water system?

Be sure to match the replacement system's capacity to your household's hot water needs to minimise energy use. Choosing a replacement greenhouse-efficient hot water system can depend on the following:

- purchase cost including deduction of any incentive program discounts
- installation cost and requirements including single or double-storey house, roof type, plumbing and available space
- operating cost over the expected life of the system
- warranty period
- number of people occupying the house and hot water usage patterns
- climate zone of the property and any system requirements, for example, cyclonic area, frost-prone area and groundwater supply
- available access to preferred energy source.

Is hot water still available during the change over of systems?

During the replacement of the system, hot water can be supplied to the household by a temporary hot water system for up to 60 calendar days. Temporary systems are not required to be greenhouse-efficient.

Do I need to install a tempering device?

At time of replacement, a tempering device is also required to be fitted to the hot water system. Tempering devices are a safety measure which reduce the potential for scalding by setting the water temperature to a maximum of 50 ˚C.

How else can I save energy with a greenhouse efficient hot water system?

Install water efficient showerheads (3-star rated under Water Efficiency Labelling Standards (WELS) scheme) and tapware (3-star or more WELS rated) to kitchen sinks, basins and laundry taps.

Where possible, locate the hot water system as close as practical to the main bathroom to reduce the amount of cold water drawn off the tap.

For more information

Further details about the electric hot water system* phase-out can be found in the Queensland Plumbing and Wastewater Code or by contacting Building Codes Queensland.

Tudor RP 100% recycled

This fact sheet is printed on Tudor RP paper which is Australian made from 100% recycled fibre. No chlorine bleaching occurs in the recycling process and Australian Paper is ISO 14001 certified. Sales of Tudor RP support Landcare Australia.

Building Codes Queensland
Department of Infrastructure and Planning
PO Box 15009 City East Qld 4002 Australia
tel. +61 7 3227 8548 fax. +61 7 3224 4683
email. buildingcodes@dip.qld.gov.au www. dip.qld.gov.au

© The State of Queensland (Department of Infrastructure and Planning) 2010. Published by the Queensland Government, May 2010, 100 George Street, Brisbane Qld 4000.
Disclaimer: This document is produced to convey general information. While every care has been taken in preparing this document, the State of Queensland accepts no responsibility for decisions or actions taken as a result of any data, information, statement or advice, express or implied, contained within. The contents of this document were correct to the best of our knowledge at the time of publishing.