EASY$ TIP SHEETS

Energy Advice Saving Yukoners Money

Quick Links

Front-Loading Clothes Washers: ENERGY STAR® Labeled

More energy-efficient than conventional washers, front-loading clothes washers can provide cost-savings of up to $70 a year through reduced use of energy, water and detergent.

Features

Most front-loading clothes washers operate more efficiently than traditional top-loading washers. The main difference between the two types of washers is that the agitator has been removed in a front-loading version. Instead of rotating around a vertical axis, the tub rotates in a horizontal plane, similar to a clothes dryer. The clothes are then tossed in and out of a shallow pool of water at the bottom of the tub, while baffles scoop up water and allow it to rain down on the tumbling clothes. In most models, the rotation direction will also alternate to reduce tangling.

Like top-loading washers, most front-loading clothes washers, allow users to select different temperature settings, water levels and wash cycles. As in a conventional washer, a pump drains water at the end of the rinse cycle, and the drum spins to extract water from the clothing. Some models will have different spin cycle speeds and internal water heaters, and many can be stacked.

Goal and Summary

This Easy$ sheet will help you make an informed decision when buying an ENERGY STAR® front loading clothes washer.

ENERGY STAR®

All front-loading clothes washers sold in Canada are ENERGY STAR® labeled, as compared with only a few top-loading washers earning the ENERGY STAR® label.

ENERGY STAR® is the symbol for energy efficiency for many products in Canada and the United States. Major household appliances that qualify for the ENERGY STAR® label save consumers money because they use less energy than conventional products, while offering the same or better performance. When electricity is generated using diesel, using more energy efficient appliances leads to less diesel being burned which results in fewer greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants

Advantages

Front-loading clothes washers offer many advantages over top loading models.

- **Reduced water consumption**. They use 35% to 50% less water than standard models, saving 14,000 to 22,000 litres of water a year in an average household.
- **Reduced energy consumption**. Because they use less water, the amount of energy required to heat the water is reduced by up to 50%. Water heating accounts for up to 90% of the energy used in clothes washers.
- **Reduced drying time**. Front-loading washers have higher speeds than conventional washers and therefore extract more water, resulting in less energy needed to dry clothes.
- **Reduced detergent use**. Lower water levels reduce detergent consumption by up to two-thirds, saving money and helping the environment.
- **Reduced wear and tear on clothes**. The tumbling action treats clothes more gently and, with no agitator, there are fewer problems with off-balance loads.
- **Better soil removal**. Tests have shown that tumble-action washers are 25% more effective in removing soil from clothes.
- **Extra-large capacity**. With the agitator removed, space is freed up for more clothes capacity. Some models can handle large, bulky items such as ski parkas and sleeping bags.
- **Safety features**. Safety designs include electronic door locks to prevent opening during a wash cycle, and child-resistant safety catches or controls.

Disadvantages

Front-loading clothes washers do have some drawbacks.

- **Purchase cost**. Front-loading washers generally cost more than their top-loading counterparts, but the higher purchase price can be offset by savings resulting from greater energy efficiency.
- **Front-loading design**. This requires bending to add and remove laundry. Some models have an optional pedestal to raise the machine, while others are slightly tilted.
- **Longer wash times**. Wash times are generally longer than with conventional washers, particularly if the machine has an internal water heater. The total cycle time is from 35 to 50 minutes for a North American-made washer, and 60 to 120 minutes for a European-made washer, compared with about 35 minutes for a conventional agitator washer. In models with high spin speeds, the longer wash time will be offset by reduced drying times.

This Easy$ tip sheet is provided by the Energy Solutions Centre.

If you have additional questions or comments, please contact the Energy Solutions Centre by:

Phone: (867) 393-7063 or from the communities at 1-800-661-0408 ext. 7063

Mail: Box 2703 (EMR-206), Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Web: **www.esc.gov.yk.ca**

energy solutions centre

Yukon
Energy, Mines and Resources