



The Difference Between Tank and Tankless Water Heaters

Hot water is an essential part of our daily routine, from showering to washing clothes and cleaning. A strong understanding of your natural gas water heater can help save you time, energy and money.

Tank vs. Tankless

There are two types of natural gas water heaters: tank and tankless.

Tank water heating systems heat water and store it until it is used. If you use a lot of hot water – depending on the tank size – you might run out of hot water at some point. A tankless water heater heats on demand so you will always have hot water.

Either type can be the right fit for your home.

Picking Your Water Heater

Understanding installation details can help you make the right decision for your household. Before you purchase a water heater, determine how much space you have available.

“A tank water heater is about 48 inches in diameter and 3 to 5 feet in height, while a tankless water heater is about the size of a suitcase,” said Mike Peacock, director of energy at Rinnai, a manufacturer of tankless water heaters. “Due to its smaller size, tankless often allows for more flexibility when it comes to storage.”

Additionally, you can often mount the tankless water heater to the outside of your house.

Once you’ve selected your water heater, reach out to a licensed professional to complete the installation. According to Peacock, on average it takes three to five hours to install a tank or tankless water heater.

Maintaining Your Water Heater

Just like any other appliance, water heaters require routine maintenance to ensure they continue to work efficiently.

Both tank and tankless water heaters accumulate sediments over time, so flushing out the unit regularly can improve efficiency. According to the Department of Energy, a quart of water from the unit should be flushed every three months, depending on the type and model of water heater you own.

When to Call a Repair Person

While day-to-day maintenance can typically be handled by the consumer, some issues require a licensed repair person.



For a tank water heater, call a repair person if you notice a leak in your water heater or a significant increase in the amount of time it takes your water to heat up.

“With a tankless water heater, a flashing error code will appear on the unit to inform you when maintenance is needed,” explained Peacock. “Once you call a repair person, they should be able to determine the exact issue by simply reading the error code.”

If you notice anything unusual with your water heater, promptly call your repair person. This will help catch any potential issues before they escalate.

Save Energy and Money

“The average lifetime of a natural gas water heater with a tank is 12 years, and it is 20 years for tankless. If you’re wondering how old your water heater is, look on the plate located on the side of the water heater for the year of manufacture,” explained Peacock.

With regular maintenance, you can maximize the performance and life of your water heater. And save energy and money along the way!

If your water heater is reaching the end of its lifespan, Texas Gas Service offers rebates on new natural gas tankless or super high-efficiency natural gas water heater models. [Click here to learn more.](#)