

Laundry

Wise-use tips

Washing

- Wash in cold water (use cold water detergents for best results). A typical household will save over \$60 per year by washing in cold water. About 90% of the energy used for washing is for heating the water.
- Wash full loads. If washing a smaller load, match the water level to the size of the load.
- Consider whether an item really needs washing – excessive washing wastes energy and water and wears clothes out faster.

Drying

- Dry clothes on a clothesline or rack instead of in a dryer. (Less wear and tear, especially on items containing elastic, such as fitted sheets and underwear. No static cling.)
- Don't over-dry: this is more likely when using the timer on the dryer because you need to guess how long a load will take to dry.
- Clean the lint filter after every load.
- If using flexible white plastic as dryer vent hose, replace it with metallic venting. Plastic venting is a fire hazard. Make sure the vent isn't blocked; clean it out at least once a year.



Flexible white plastic



Rigid metal

- Clean lint from dryer vent where it exits the wall. Make sure the outside flap opens when the dryer is running, and closes when it's not. Flaps that are

stuck open can allow cold air inside. Insects, birds, and even rodents can also enter through a flap that's stuck open.

- Sort your laundry. Don't mix heavy and light items together in the dryer.
- Dry full loads, but don't overload the dryer.
- Don't vent dryers indoors, even through a filter. Very fine lint can escape through the filter and cause problems with your furnace or even breathing problems for some people. The savings on heating costs are very small and the potential problems are large.
- If your dryer has a moisture sensor, clean it occasionally with rubbing alcohol on a soft cloth, especially if you use fabric softener sheets. Sensors are usually located inside the dryer drum but can be hard to find. Look for two curved metallic strips. Consult your owner's manual for details.

Buying tips

Washers

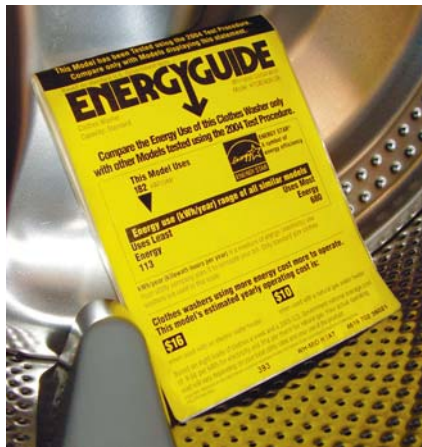
Buy an ENERGY STAR®-labeled washer



- Front-loading models use one-half the energy, water, and detergent of most top-loading models. (ENERGY STAR washers are also available in top-loading models.)
- Front-loading models reduce wear and tear on clothes so they last longer.
- Less drying time—no more waiting for the dryer to finish before you can add the next load from the washer.

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- If comparing ENERGY STAR washers, check the yellow Energy Guide label for energy use. The label is usually in the drum of the washer. For more detailed energy use, look up the Modified Energy Factor (MEF) at www.energystar.gov. The Modified Energy Factor takes into account reduced drying time for washers that remove more water. The higher the MEF, the more efficient the washer.



Energy Guide label in a front loading washer

Dryers

Buy a **gas** dryer if possible.

- Gas dryers cost half as much to operate per load as electric dryers. Gas dryers cost \$50 to \$70 more to purchase, but the savings on operating costs are typically \$40 to \$90 per year at current gas and electric rates. Dryers don't come with Energy Guide labels and are not ENERGY STAR rated.
- Concerned about global warming? Gas dryers and water heaters emit about 25% as much carbon dioxide as electric ones while doing the same job (see "Resources").
- Want to buy a gas dryer but need gas piping? Call MGE at 252-7333 to arrange for a free gas piping installation estimate.
- Buy a dryer with a moisture sensor.

Resources:

- MGE's Home Energy Line for energy advice: 252-7117, Mon.-Fri. 8-4:30
- Focus On Energy for Cash-Back rewards on appliances, lighting, heating and cooling: 1-800-762-7077 or www.focusonenergy.com
- www.ConsumerReports.org (or ask reference desk at public library). Advice on purchasing washers and dryers, ratings, repair records, etc. Consumer Reports also offers advice at www.GreenerChoices.org
- MGE's "The Power of Working Together" brochure. Learn how simple, energy-saving actions add up to help our environment. Link to *The Power of Working Together* brochure: www.mge.com/Images/PDF/Brochures/Community/PowerWorkingTogether_Savings.pdf
- Dryer Venting Dangers: www.mge.com/Images/PDF/Brochures/Residential/DryerVentingDanger.pdf
- Line drying tips: www.earthlingshandbook.org/laundry
www.srmi.biz/Tips.Appliances.Dry_your_clothes_for_free.htm
- MGE's cold water wash calculator: www.mge.com/home/appliances/laundry