



Heat Pump Water Heaters—Frequently Asked Questions

What is a “heat pump water heater (HPWH)?”

It is a replacement for a traditional electric water heater and it stores and provides the same amount of hot water. It is different from a traditional water heater in that it provides some dehumidification of the air near the water heater and uses about 40-60% electricity.

How does a HPWH work?

A traditional water heater works by converting electricity directly into heat. For every kWh (unit of energy) of electricity you buy you get a certain amount of heat to warm the water in the tank. HPWH's are different. In addition to using electricity to heat the water, they take the heat energy from the air around the water heater and transfer it to the water in the tank. Due to their design, they can do this even when the air is cooler than the water. You purchase less electricity to get the same amount of hot water.

How much will I save if I get one?

The actual amount you'll save depends on where you live, how many people are in the house, where the water heater is in the house and other factors. As an example, a typical family of four people in Albany, New York with a traditional electric water heater in the basement likely spends about \$40 per month on water heating. That family is likely to save about \$20 per month, \$240 per year, by switching to a HPWH. You may be able to save more or less depending on your water consumption patterns and your circumstances. Please understand that NYSERDA does not guarantee the savings.

How does the incentive program work?

The complete and official rules are on the application. Basically, the steps are to:

- Live in a [participating](#) service territory, buy a [qualifying unit](#), and have it installed by a [participating contractor](#) by April 15, 2004;
- Have the contractor send in the incentive application along with a copy of your purchase receipt;
- You'll receive a \$300 check within 8 weeks.

For any additional questions, just call us at **1-877-NY-SMART**

Who is responsible for filling out the application?

Your contractor is responsible, but you will need to help by providing information such as where you want the check mailed and your electric utility account number.

Are HPWHs reliable?

The units are built to be trouble free, but as with any mechanical device, could break down for a variety of reasons. The units all have a warranty by the manufacturer for a specified period of time to guard against premature break down.

Will the water get as hot as it did before?

Yes. It will get just as hot as before. The thermostat is the same.

Will I start getting cold water sooner with this unit than I used to?

No. You will have the same amount of hot water as you would have with a properly sized traditional water heater.

What brands of HPWH are eligible for the incentive?

Any "drop-in" type HPWH with an energy factor of at least 2.37 is eligible for the HPWH Program incentive. Contact **1-877-NY-SMART** or review our list of HPWH models that are eligible for this program.

What does a HPWH cost?

Due to the fact the technology is relatively new, HPWH models tend to cost more than traditional electric resistance water heaters. However, the unit should pay for itself through electrical savings under the right circumstances within 2 – 3 years. After that, the annual savings goes directly into your pocket.

Who do I call if it breaks?

Your contractor will be able to assist you with any repairs or warranties.

Is it worth the extra money?

That is up to you to decide. Studies show that families in New York generally save enough to pay for the extra purchase cost in about 2-3 years, with the incentive.

They are expensive. Can I finance all or part of the cost?

New York Energy \$martSM offers another excellent program called the [New York Energy \\$martSM Loan Fund](#) where you can finance qualified energy improvements in your home at low interest rates through participating traditional lending institutions.

Your contractor may also have information about financing programs. Your loan approval is dependent on credit worthiness. Learn more about the **New York Energy \$martSM** Loan Fund.

Are there any special installation requirements?

The size of the unit may differ slightly from your current water heater. To save the most money, the water heater should not be installed where the temperature drops below 45°F or within space that is electrically heated. The installer may also need to install a small condensate drain.

Are the units noisy?

HPWH models typically make about as much noise as a refrigerator or an air conditioner, which is a consideration for some people.

Are there any special maintenance issues?

Yes, there is one. These units do have an air filter. Clean the filter twice a year or whenever it looks dirty by rinsing it with water. The contractor should show you where the filter is located during the installation.

Are HPWH's new?

No, HPWH's have been around for decades but the "drop-in" design is a relatively new concept.

Is it safe?

Yes, if you follow the manufacturers instructions. Like any other appliance, care is required as it does use electricity and could produce scalding hot water.

When can I expect my incentive check?

Expect to receive your incentive check within 8 weeks. Let our staff know if it has been longer than that by calling **1-877-NYSMART**.

Is my contractor qualified for the program?

Click for a list of participating contractors. Contractors have to attend a training workshop and sign a participation agreement to become a participating contractor.