

How to Buy an Energy-Efficient Appliance

By Sustainable Belmont

When buying new home appliances, many people just look for the cheapest model available. But appliances really have two price tags—the purchase price and the operating cost. With energy prices on the rise, buying energy-efficient appliances can help reduce your household's electricity and natural gas costs. And since most of our nation's electricity comes from fossil fuels, the primary contributor to global warming, energy-efficient appliances are a smart climate solution.

Find an energy-efficient appliance by looking for the Energy Star logo, which indicates the model is among the most efficient in its class. Then, look at the yellow-and-black EnergyGuide label, which is required for most major appliances and lists the model's annual operating cost. (It is important to note that the EnergyGuide label is *not* an indicator of energy efficiency.) Multiply the annual operating cost by 5, 10, and/or 15 years to determine how much you will pay to run it over the long term; you might find that the model with the higher purchase price represents a better deal in the long run.

To make energy-efficient appliances even more affordable, the Belmont Municipal Light Department offers rebates for a variety of Energy Star rated products. You can obtain a rebate form from the BMLD website at www.town.belmont.ma.us/electric.

For more information or to receive Sustainable Belmont's monthly e-newsletter, send email to sustainablebelmont@gmail.com.