

Blog: Can You Fix the Problem with Water Heater Repairs?

Checklist: What to Look for in a New Water Heater

Has your water heater been letting you down? If your trusted plumbing professional has indicated that repair isn't possible and it's time for a new one, don't go in uninformed. While buying a new water heater might not be at the top of your spring to-do list, if yours has gone bust, it's important to know what to look for when shopping for a replacement. Your plumber can help guide you, but here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Consider tank capacity.** One of the most common reasons for water heater replacement is a tank that is too small and can't keep up with demand. The size you need depends on how many people will be using hot water daily in your house. Keep in mind you need hot water for showers, the dishwasher, and laundry.
- **Consider the first-hour rating.** The first-hour rating, or FHR, is a measure of how many gallons of water a full water heater tank can deliver in one hour. This information should be on the EnergyGuide label on the water heater. Use the [Energy Saver](#) website to calculate the capacity you need for your family.
- **Consider energy efficiency.** As with all appliances, it's beneficial to buy the highest energy efficiency rated system your budget will allow. The amount of energy savings over time will more than make-up for the initial cost of the equipment and installation. With water heaters, the efficiency isn't based solely on operational energy use. The ratings also factor into its recovery efficiency, or how effectively the energy source heats the water, the amount of heat lost per hour from water in the tank when not in use, and the loss of heat or energy as the water cycles through the water heating system.
- **Remember to look at the warranty.** Our advice is never ever to buy an appliance, especially a water heater, without a warranty. Manufacturer warranties generally run from three to twelve years, depending on the model and the brand. Choose a brand with the most extended available warranty. You might pay more up front, but it will save you at least that much in repair costs should something go awry.
- **Ask about tankless water heaters.** An alternative to traditional tank water heater systems is a tankless system. A tankless system only heats water as you need it instead of heating it and storing it, which requires regular reheating cycles to keep hot water at the ready. There are pros and cons to each type of system. Your plumbing professional can help you make the right choice for your needs and preferences.