

## **DOE issues new efficiency standards for refrigerators, freezers**

The Department of Energy issued final energy efficiency standards Aug. 26 for home refrigerators and freezers that will improve their efficiency by about 25% by 2014, DOE said.

The new standards, developed through a consensus process with manufacturers, consumer groups and environmentalists, are expected to deliver more than \$200 per year in electricity bill savings for the typical consumer, the Energy Department said. Nationally, the new rules are expected to save consumers \$21 billion on their energy bills through 2043, DOE said.

"These standards reflect a consensus among manufacturers, consumer groups and environmentalists," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "The agreement builds on more than three decades of commonsense state and federal refrigerator efficiency standards that have collectively saved American families hundreds of billions of dollars," he said. "What's so remarkable is that even as the size of American refrigerators has increased and more features have been added, the historical purchase prices have come down and we are all saving money on our electricity bills every month."

Since the first standards were set in the 1970s, the energy needed to power home refrigerators has decreased by more than two-thirds, while at the same time, costs have come down and storage space has increased, DOE said.

The efficiency standards issued Aug. 26 finalize the proposed consensus standards agreed to by the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, more than 25 individual refrigerator manufacturers, and consumer and environmental groups. The standards will go into effect three years after they are published in the Federal Register.

"Refrigerator standards have been quietly saving consumers money while protecting our environment for more than 35 years," said David Goldstein, energy program co-director at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "But these new standards are the coolest yet, because they show that innovation can keep driving improvements even after decades of progress." New fridges will use far less electricity than they used to, "and that means less pollution from power plants," he said.

A typical refrigerator in 2014 will use about one-fifth as much electricity as one from the mid-1970s, said the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. The average new fridge today is about 20% larger and costs about 60% less than a 1970s-era unit, ACEEE said.

The standards are posted on DOE's website. — JEANNINE ANDERSON

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