



Hello,

We here at BullsEye Plumbing Heating & Air have recently been receiving a large number of question regarding the new 2015 NAECA (National Appliance Energy Conservation Act). In 2010 the act was modified to make changes regarding energy and efficiency. These changes have been put off and held back from actual implementation for several years. As of April 16, 2015 they will be enacted and made a requirement for everyone.

These changes are very important to note because they change many things about water heater regulation. These changes can vary depending on the size and capacity as well as the size of the area where the units are installed.

I have included a short video produced by a water heater manufacturer that will explain what some of the changes are. Please go to the link below and view this short 2 minute video.

<https://www..youtube.com/embed/b4vBXQCbovs?feature=oembed>

Due to the new requirements water heater prices will soon be changing. For some water heaters the cost increase will be as low as \$150.00 - \$200.00. Some standard water heater models will be discontinued and the new replacement option can be more than double the cost of the old unit. For some water heaters with larger storage capacity, the new regulations currently require the install of a newer high efficiency condensing water heater. This can create many more new changes to an install such as the addition of electrical outlets and GFI switches, as well as, new venting requirements and condensate pumps. All of these changes would increase pricing.

Some additional issues that will need to be considered are the new size changes. These new sizes may also create issues for the following reasons. In most utility closets or mechanical rooms the install of the water heater is usually very tight in terms of the required clearance from walls and other obstructions. These same old clearance requirements may now force installers to modify existing plumbing and venting to allow the new larger water heaters and the installations to meet current minimum requirements for clearance.

In addition to more expensive water heaters and the changes to the existing plumbing and venting due to size and clearance requirements, homes with water heaters in closets and/or crawl spaces may not be able to fit the new larger water heaters into the openings or doors. This will force property owners to either have the doors replaced with larger doors or change the location of the install. Another possible solution would be to change technology to a different kind of water heater.

These new changes will not be optional and at this time there are no variances being given. This will likely change over time to allow for certain exceptions however at this time none exist.

Please keep in mind that at this time it is my understanding that water heaters already manufactured before April 16, 2015 will be allowed to be sold and installed. This means that even after April 16, 2015 (until the current stock runs out) the older less costly water heaters will be available for purchase and install. The process of using the remaining stock may take 2-3 months.

Update:

Before I was able to complete this communication to all of you I received a call from our water heater vendor and they explained to me that the actual manufacturers of the water heaters for both Bradford White as well as Rheem have started having problems keeping up with the demand for the older model water heaters. I was told by my supplier that the older units will likely be out of stock before the date of April 16, 2015. At this time our replacement stock orders are already being delayed. This does not mean that a problem currently exists, however I feel it is my responsibility to inform you with the most recent and accurate information that I have available. At this time we are still replacing water heaters with the same units and for the same prices.

Secondly I am sure you are wondering: What are the size changes and what are the new costs for the new water heaters? As of 3:00PM March 17, 2015 the manufacturers have not released the new specs or the new pricing. I will keep you posted as soon as I hear anything.

At BullsEye we would never want to advise our customers to panic or make changes that are not necessary. We do not believe in using scare tactics to try and gain additional work. I would also like to say that we strongly discourage the use of such tactics by others as well. This communication is simply informational so that our customers can be as informed as possible when making decisions related to plumbing and HVAC repairs.

For this reason the official stance of BullsEye is this:

Do not make a rushed decision to install a new water heater because someone is telling you that if you don't you will be out thousands. The reality is that the cost of most water heater swap-outs will only increase by \$150.00 - \$200.00 for a standard 40 gallon gas water heater with enough room for the new larger size.

The average life expectancy of a water heater is 7-10 years some are shorter however I have seen more than a few go for twice that long. It all depends on the water, the environmental conditions and the way the water heater has been maintained. If you have done the recommended maintenance and taken care of your water heater and it is installed in a warm dry place with good ventilation, your water heater should last for at least 7-10 years.

My advice would be that if you have a fairly new water heater or if it is working fine and the age is less than seven years old you should do nothing. These new changes are permanent and will be in effect when you need to replace your existing water heater several years from now. I can't think of any reason you should change out a perfectly good water heater that will likely last you several more years.

If you have a water heater that is showing signs of age (rust, not providing enough hot water, is over 7 years old or is currently in need of repair) you may want to consider the option of putting the money into replacing your water heater before the water heaters manufactured before April 16, 2015 are no-longer available. If you know you will need to replace your water heater within the near future it may be more cost effective to act sooner rather than later.

If you should have any further questions please feel free to contact me. I am here to help!

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