

Electrical appliances to be cheaper to run and last longer with new standards

- New tighter rules for how much energy white goods like washing machines and fridges as well as TVs can use will help save British consumers £75 a year on their energy bills
- manufacturers required to make spare parts for products available for the first time – helping extend the lifespan of products by up to 10 years and preventing them ending up on the scrap heap sooner than they should
- new energy labels introduced as part of UK plans to drive up product standards and build back greener

Fridges, washing machines and televisions will soon be cheaper to run, easier to repair and will last longer thanks to plans for new energy efficiency legislation announced by UK government today (Wednesday 10 March).

Ministers are set to introduce tough new rules for electrical products to tackle 'premature obsolescence' – a short lifespan deliberately built into an appliance by manufacturers which leads to unnecessary and costly replacements for the consumer.

From this Summer, manufacturers will be legally obliged to make spare parts for products available to consumers for the first time – a new legal right for repairs – so that electrical appliances can be fixed easily. The move is expected to extend the lifespan of products by up to 10 years – preventing appliances ending up on the scrap heap sooner than they should and reducing carbon emissions at the same time. The UK generates around 1.5 million tonnes of electrical waste every year.

The changes will also set far higher energy-efficiency standards for electrical products which, overall, will save consumers an average of £75 a year on energy bills. They will cut 8 mega tonnes of carbon emissions in 2021 by reducing the amount of energy products consume over their life-time – the equivalent of removing all emissions from Birmingham and Leeds each year.

Business and Energy Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, said:

Our plans to tighten product standards will ensure more of our electrical goods can be fixed rather than thrown on the scrap heap, putting more money back in the pockets of consumers whilst protecting the environment.

Going forward, our upcoming energy efficiency framework will push electrical products to use even less energy and material resources, saving people money on their bills and reducing carbon emissions as we work to reach net zero by 2050.

Meanwhile, from 1 March, new energy labels have also been introduced which simplify the way energy efficiency is displayed on a new scale from A-G. Today the vast majority of appliances are classified as A+, A++ or A+++. The new labels will improve the old system by raising the bar for each class, meaning very few appliances will now be classified as A.

The changes will provide more accurate information on energy efficiency, incentivising manufacturers to go further. They are also designed to encourage consumers to buy more energy efficient products, and boost people's confidence in the environmental credentials of the products they are buying. Now the UK is an independent nation outside the EU, the EU emblem on energy efficiency labels has also been replaced with the Union Flag.

Climate Change Minister, Lord Callanan, said:

We can all play our part in ending our contribution to climate change, even when we're choosing a new electrical appliance. The new energy labels we have introduced this week will help consumers make more informed decisions about how eco-friendly one smart TV or dishwasher is over another, helping us reduce our carbon footprint and build back greener.

Head of International Collaboration at Energy Saving Trust, Emilie Carmichael, said:

This is another positive step in raising the minimum energy performance for domestic products. Simplifying the way energy efficiency is displayed on labels will help consumers to make more informed choices to reduce their energy consumption and bills. Equally, every small step that consumers take in choosing the most efficient appliances will help the UK in reaching its net zero targets.

The government is also today publishing a summary of responses to a recent call for evidence on energy-related products, which explored the scope for introducing even more ambitious climate-friendly policy for energy consuming appliances now the UK has left the EU transition period. This work feeds into a forthcoming policy framework, which the Prime Minister included in his [10 Point Plan for a green industrial revolution](#).

The government consulted on updated [Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Regulations for a range of industrial and domestic energy-related products](#) between September and November 2020, and we have now published the government response. These measures are estimated to lead to energy savings of 21.5 terawatt hours and savings of 1.7 mega tonnes of CO₂-equivalent by 2050.

Ecodesign policies saved 45 mega tonnes of CO₂-equivalent in the UK between 2010 and 2019.

Altogether, ecodesign measures for a range of energy-related products are estimated to save consumers £75 on their energy bills and save 8 mega tonnes of CO₂-equivalent in 2021 – the equivalent of the average yearly carbon emissions of 12 million homes.

From 1 March 2021 retailers have been required to display a re-scaled energy label alongside washing machines, dishwashers, household fridges, and electronic displays at the point of sale. The re-scaled labels will better communicate a product's efficiency relative to other models on the market, so that consumers can make more informed purchasing decisions.

The draft Regulations will apply in Great Britain and reflect what was agreed by the UK as a Member State at EU level in December 2018 and January 2019. In accordance with the Northern Ireland Protocol, EU Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Regulations will continue to apply in Northern Ireland.

BEIS aims to lay Regulations before Parliament this Spring to bring these requirements into force in Great Britain in the Summer.

In June 2020, the UK government published a Call for Evidence on energy-related products inviting views on how the UK can maximise the benefits of energy-related products policy following the end of the transition period. Today we [published the summary of responses to that Call for evidence](#).

A second [consultation on draft ecodesign and energy labelling regulations for lighting products](#) closed on 27 January 2021. The government is analysing the feedback and will issue its response in due course.

It is estimated that the UK generated approximately 1.5 million tonnes of Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) in 2017: find out more at [Valpak EEE Flow 2018 Report](#).