



HOW TO REPLACE YOUR INEFFICIENT BOILER

If you have a gas or oil boiler and it is over 10 – 15 years old it is worth considering a new one. You might also qualify for a £400 grant. Older boilers are less efficient and cost you more in fuel. If you don't know the age of your boiler you can find this out from the SEDBUK database (details later).

If your boiler is 15 years old or more then it is likely to be a G rated boiler. This is a boiler which is less than 70 % efficient. Replacing an old G rated boiler with a new A rated condensing boiler with a full set of heating controls can save up to a quarter on your heating bills straight away and can save up to 1.2 tonnes of CO₂ per year. **There is a boiler scrappage scheme available (until funds are all allocated) to replace G rated boilers. This provides a grant of £400.** For more information contact E.S.T. at 0800 512 012

All replacement boilers in Scotland now have to be condensing boilers. These are available as standard “system” boilers and condensing combis.

“A” rated condensing boiler models are available. These are over 90 % efficient and are not always more expensive than the less efficient models.

You can save on the costs of a boiler by having one that's not any bigger than required, or by having a modulating boiler. Modulating boilers automatically adjust for the heat required.

Installers generally overestimate the capacity of boiler required. Unless you have had an extension built since the existing boiler was installed, you will not require a new boiler with a higher capacity than the existing boiler. However if you opt for a combi boiler it's best to have a capacity of at least 82,000 BTUs.

In addition to saving on the cost of the boiler, having a boiler the correct size will be cheaper to run and will last longer, especially if there is a room thermostat also.

Always get more than one quote for the work. Scottish Gas always charge more than other installers and usually sub contract the work. However they tend to spend more time working out the sizing required.

A database showing the efficiency of boilers (old and new) is available at www.sedbuk.com This gives the efficiency of boilers but also the dates each model was made, which can be useful for working out the age of a boiler. The website can be quirky for older boilers. Sometimes it's easiest to find a boiler by scrolling through general types rather than names.

At the same time as having a new boiler it would be well worth upgrading the heating controls for additional savings. If you have a hot water tank it is important to have a separate thermostat on this, fitted around the middle of the tank for most systems.

Modern heating systems with boilers require both an overall room thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves (TRV) on each radiator apart from in the same room as the room thermostat. Programmable room thermostats are also available. You may wish to have a 7 day programmer and some provide the facility to set the heating and hot water at totally independent times. Most households overestimate how much hot water is needed and the hot water rarely needs to be heated as long as space heating in the winter.

It would be worth having a power flush of the system prior to a new boiler being installed, unless this has been done recently.

If you have an instant electric shower, you would make further fuel savings if you had these showers supplied with hot water heated by the new gas system. These are much more economical to run than instant electric showers.

Condensing boilers have a small plastic pipe to provide a drain for the small amounts of condensate. There were many problems last winter with external condensate pipes freezing. To prevent this problem the condensate pipe should be fitted to drain into an existing internal pipe such as the outflow pipe under a sink.

As condensing boilers give off steam from the flue, appropriate siting of the flue is required.

Advice on Boiler settings if you have a Condensing Boiler with a Room Thermostat

To ensure maximum boiler efficiency, leave the boiler set as low as possible. Do not overdo it though. Work out by trial and error the lowest settings you need for each time of year. If the settings are too low, there will not be enough heat available to the house as a whole. This advice does not apply to non condensing boilers with room thermostats. For these the boiler should be set at high.

Wood stoves

To provide as low a carbon source of heating as possible, it helps greatly to have a wood stove to supplement your main heating and/or as an alternative to an open fire. Stoves are better than fires because less heat is wasted up the chimney both when the stove is on and when it is not in use. Some wood stoves can provide water heating.

There is a really good selection of nice wood stoves now available. B & Q have a basic model. The website for Jotul (spelt with the Swedish o) has a good range. Other suppliers include : Donside Heating Supplies Ltd at Alford. They are at Donside Road, Alford tel 019755 63663 and Kenny Patterson at K&I Paterson - Paterson Stoves, Lumphanan tel 01339 883272 www.sootysweep.co.uk : Hutchesons of Portsoy has stoves and woodfuel boilers. 27 Seafield Terrace, Portsoy tel 01261 842396. www.hutchesonsofportsoy.co.uk

There are several local suppliers of logs and other wood fuel

More information on wood fuel is available at www.usewoodfuel.co.uk

Banchory Energy Reduction Initiative (B.E.R.I.) is a local community organisation funded by the Scottish government's Climate Challenge Fund until March 2012 and run by volunteers and part time staff. Online information at www.banchory.org see link to community projects. For more information tel 077 697 125 20 e mail beri.banchory@hotmail.co.uk Drop in advice sessions at Banchory Town Hall Mondays and Fridays 10.30 – 12.30

