

Understanding Energy Star: Appliances

By Stacey Hawkins

Many people know that buying an Energy Star® home will save them money on their utility bills, and reduce the negative impact they have on the environment, but to understand why Energy Star homes are the way to go when purchasing a home, it's vital to understand what makes these homes truly more efficient.

Despite the popular myth that creating an Energy Star home is all about increasing a home's insulation, an Energy Star home is essentially a system, made up of many different components that work together to achieve not only energy efficiency, but a healthy, comfortable home.

Throughout the *Understanding Energy Star* series, Victor Fiume, general manager of The Durham Group and past president of the Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) will explain the components that create an Energy Star Home, including Proper Sealing of the

Outside Walls and Roof, Furnaces, Heat Recovery Ventilators (HRVs), Windows, Appliances, Below and Above Grade Insulation, Framing Techniques, Furnace Ducting and Return Air Systems, and Passive Solar Energy Techniques. Homeowners in the resale market can also reap the benefits of energy efficiency by incorporating some of the components into their homes.

This week, the focus is on appliances.

You've seen them in stores, in advertisements and often as part of a bonus package that a builder will offer their purchasers.

But is there really that much of a difference between a standard appliance and an Energy Star appliance? In a word, yes.

The appliances which can qualify for an Energy Star rating include fridges, freezers, dishwashers and washing machines.

The appliances must be designed to save a minimum of 10 per cent over a standard appliance to qualify for the rating.

The biggest savings can be found by using Energy Star washing machines and dishwashers, both of which can save over 50 per cent compared to their conventional counterparts.

While stoves and dryers do not currently qualify under the program, homeowners can save money on their bills by switching to a natural gas stove and dryer.

Some Energy Star appliances have a direct current (DC) motor, which use less electricity than the standard alternating current (AC) motor.

Washing machines use less water and the heating element in the dishwasher is much more efficient. Fridges are better insulated to keep the cold air in.

When shopping for an appliance, you will notice a sticker on it with an Energuide Rating. This number indicates how much energy the appliance will use.

The figure is based on several factors, including the motor, insulation, water consumption, etc. depending on the appliance. It is



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rated on a scale of 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating more energy efficiency.

When the time comes to replace your appliances; think Energy Star.

Not only is the additional cost paid back through the proven savings in energy in short order, but you keep right on saving throughout the life of the appliance.

Next Week: Passive Solar Energy Techniques

