

Local news

ENVIRONMENT

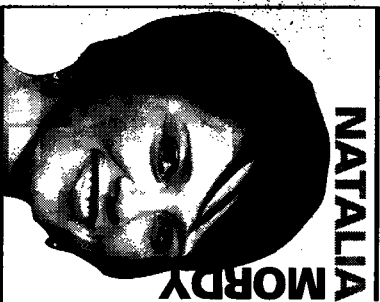
Younger washing machines the more efficient choice

It's time to talk energy. This is one area that we all could really improve on, and, no, I am not talking about physical energy, although I know that I could use a bit of a boost at around 3 p.m.

I am talking about household energy consumption. Last week, I discussed the overheating issue of Canadian energy expenditure and our apparent lack of gumption to curtail the soaring utilization of precious energy over the last 20 years.

Although I mentioned some helpful laundry related energy saving hints last week, the ultra confusing world of washing machines, their exciting kWh (kilowatt/hour) ratings and some helpful hints are the topic of discussion this week.

Although most of us can wind up quite confused when contemplating the best clothes washer purchase, help is on the way. I must confess, after researching this very intriguing world of laundry appliances, I am guilty of skipping the whole EnerGuide step to purchasing the perfect



Eco-friendly Lifestyles

duo, and I do regret it.

When you receive your energy bill, do you cringe before opening? Well, I do, and that could very well be due to my laundry appliances and their lust for energy. Although the washer and dryer are important when discussing energy utilization today, the washer is the martyr.

According to OEE Canada (The Office of Energy Efficiency) and EnerGuide, Canadians on average perform 392 wash loads per year. The average washing machine (aged from 1997-2002)

uses anywhere from roughly 299 to 930 kWh/year, so about .76 to 2.37 kWh/cycle.

Having said that, British Columbians pay an average of \$0.0688 per kilowatt utilized.

You do the math. For one of the most efficient washing machines, on average you will pay \$20.57 per year and for an older, more inefficient one, you will pay \$63.98. Quite a difference in the long run.

Now for the shopping. This part can be quick and easy if you understand how to use the EnerGuide. This tool is very helpful, if used properly. The EnerGuide has been in use for about 25 years and is required by law in Canada to be affixed to all new appliances.

It is a great way to compare appliances and their energy efficiency and, of course, the long-run cost. The large number on the EnerGuide sticker tells you how much energy the appliance will consume based on 392 loads per year. There is also a shaded bar scale that rates the machine's efficiency accord-

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ing to similar models. Also, make sure that you can calculate your energy cost over 14 years, because according to OEE, that is the average life of a washer.

Be cognizant of the number of laundry loads you do in a given week and work out your approximate yearly number.

You already know that the EnerGuide gauges its energy consumption number according to an average of 392 loads/year, so, bearing all that in mind, you can calculate which appliance suits your budget. Take in to account not only the selling price, but the accrued energy cost in the long run. Take into account that energy costs are liable to

go up as well—so you might want to look for Energy Star approved appliances, as it is an international symbol of premium energy efficiency for household machines.

One helpful hint that is very eco-friendly—is to try not to use your washer at peak energy consumption times such as morning, noon and from 5 to 7 p.m.

Also, use cold or warm water instead of hot, that way your washer will use less energy to heat the water.

Here are some useful websites that can help you calculate your yearly energy usage for appliances according to your area's energy rates, as

well as direct you to more energy efficient machines: www.oec.mrcan.gc.ca and www.energystar.gc.ca

Try the calculator on the OEE site to find out your total consumption over a 14-year washing machine life span, and see what you can come up with, it is really quite intriguing.

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