

## *Safety Tip of the Month: February*

### **NEVER WORRY ABOUT HOT WATER AGAIN Tips on Choosing and Maintaining Your Water Heater**

Household chores such as doing laundry and running the dishwasher put a heavy load on your water heater. In fact, your water heater is the second largest energy user and contributor to your household utility bill. This makes it particularly important to choose a water heater wisely and provide the proper maintenance. The National Propane Gas Association (NPGA) offers you these energy-saving tips on purchasing a water heater and making it last longer:

#### **Choosing Your Water Heater**

There are several factors to consider when buying a water heater:

- First, you must choose between gas and electric. Propane gas water heaters heat more than twice as much water in an hour as a comparable electric model.
- Second, carefully check the Energy Guide Label. This bright yellow sticker tells you how much it will cost to run the water heater for one year. More important, the sticker compares the efficiency of the unit with similar models, giving you objective information on the unit's performance.
- Third, double-check the warranty. Water heaters typically come with a five- or ten-year warranty. Usually, the only difference between the two warranties is that in the model with the extended warranty there is a second sacrificial anode rod inside the tank, which works to protect the tank from rusting by 'sacrificing' itself through corrosion. Often, a second anode can be added for a fraction of the cost of the extended warranty.
- Finally, ask the salesperson if the dip tube is curved. The dip tube is a cold water inlet that delivers water to the bottom of the tank. When teamed with a full-port drain valve, the curved dip tube releases water in a swirling motion. This flushes out sediment more effectively and helps extend the tank's life.

#### **Energy-Saving Tips for Your Water Heater**

Here are some easy and practical ideas that homeowners can implement to help cut their energy bills:

- You can save more than 10 percent on your water-heating bill by turning down your water heater from the standard 140 degrees to 130 degrees.
- To extend your water heater's life and increase energy efficiency, drain it every six months to remove lime deposits and sediment.
- Install flow-restricting showerheads. You can reduce hot water usage by up to 50 percent without affecting shower pressure.
- Repair leaky faucets. A leak that fills a coffee cup in 10 minutes wastes 3,200 gallons of water a year.
- Finally, schedule a periodic tune-up to ensure that your water heater is working properly. If you have a propane water heater, ask your local propane supplier to conduct a Gas Appliance System Check (GAS Check®). During your GAS Check®, a certified service technician will examine your water heater and advise you on methods for safe, efficient operation.

By following these simple tips, your heater will run at maximum efficiency, saving you money on the hot water used by your family.