KBSA'S QUICK GUIDE TO THE NEW ENERGY SAVING LABELLING

As we become more environmentally consciousness, saving energy at home is increasingly important, particularly if that means lower energy bills. From June 2011 all new appliances will carry revised EU energy labelling to reflect a new class of more energy efficient models classified as A+ A++ and A+++.

So, if you are thinking of investing in a new appliance and want to make an informed choice about the performance of an appliance and the savings that can be made, here is our guide to what you need to know:

What Has Changed?

The new label to look out for on washing machines is:

As before there are seven categories of energy efficiency with green being the most efficient to red being the least but instead of A-G they run from A+++ to D.

Other changes include new measures of energy efficiency. For example, on laundry products, optimum load, spin drying efficiency and noise level become compulsory.

Two new symbols for annual water consumption and annual energy consumption must now also be shown.

Existing Categories

The existing system was always viewed as a 'first step' toward educating consumers about energy use and had a simple + symbol for each 10% improvement in efficiency:

- A to A+ will save 10% on energy use
- A to A++ will save 20%
- A to A+++ will save 30%

The New Categories

As manufacturers have adopted new technology, the difference in energy efficiency improvements between different categories of products has moved forward at different rates. With examples like refrigeration where savings of up to 60% are not uncommon, the scale of 10% increments has been changed to a scale of different sized increments for different appliance categories to reflect the differing technology now available. At a glance the new energy label categories will equate to the following improvements in energy efficiency:

	A	**A+**	**A++**	**A+++**
Laundry	Good	13% better	24% better	32% better
Dishwashing	Good	11% better	21% better	30% better
Refrigeration	Good	20% better	40% better	60% better

Cost Savings

When it comes to how much energy you can save with a more efficient appliance, this will depend on the type of appliance and how often it is used and in the case of a fridge freezer which is on 24/7 choosing a more efficient model really makes sense.

To work out your personal energy consumption there is an online calculator on the AMDEA (manufacturer's association) Time to Change website www.t2c.org.uk but as a guide to typical savings to replace your 11 year old appliance with an A+ rated model you can save in the region of:

Washing Machine	£50 pa
Dishwasher	£25 pa
Tumble Dryer	£30 pa
Fridge Freezer	£70 pa
Fridge	£35 pa

Rising Energy Costs

Taking a high energy consumption appliance such as a tumble dryer as a case study, energy-efficiency can make a big difference in savings.
For example if you use a tumble dryer 3 times a week = 150 times a year, energy usage quickly mounts up:

- 2kWh/cycle A = 300kWh over a year
- 4kWh/cycle C = 600kWh pa

At 2010 electricity prices averaging 13p per kWh that makes a difference of 300 x 13p = £39 pa. Over its 10 year life that's a difference of around £400 on the cost of the electricity.

Some units with a low energy usage achieve this by running the cycle over a long period which can be inconvenient. Others use innovative technology such as heat pumps to make the heat generation much more efficient than a traditional resistance heating unit. Improved insulation is now common and lower water use means less water to heat and therefore less energy used.

So to get the best out of your upgrade to more energy efficient appliances, it pays to study the new energy labelling carefully before you buy. For those who do not have the time to study the labels in detail, the government agency DEFRA has created the Energy Efficiency Approved Endorsement, which denotes an appliance which has been independently certified as 'better than average' in the appliance class with regard to energy efficiency and water use. The label does not always denote the greatest overall saving, but always denotes a reasonable saving in energy and water use.

This guide has been produced by the KBSA (May 2011) in association with KBSA corporate member Swift UK.

For more information visit the following sites:

AMDEA Time to Change website http://www.t2c.org.uk
Energy Saving Trust http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/
Direct Gov website
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Greenerhomeandgarden/Greenerlabelsandclaims/DG_064872?CID=EGL&PLA=url_mon&CRE=energy_label