



Appliance Standards 101

NEEP's APPLIANCE STANDARDS PROJECT

	<p>NEEP's Appliance Standards Project works in a collaborative manner to track and coordinate efforts around the region to advance strong minimum efficiency standards for appliances and equipment. NEEP's Northeast Appliance Efficiency Standards Project participates at both the state and federal level. NEEP promotes positions that are shaped by the unique realities of our region, including the particular market, program or policy circumstances that exist. While minimum efficiency standards offer an intelligent strategy to achieve a number of positive benefits (significant energy and emission reductions, while saving consumers money) for our states and country, we constantly strive to build as broad a coalition as possible to promote their powerful benefits. A diverse coalition greatly enhances the credibility and strength of our positions, improving our chances of affecting particular rulemakings.</p>
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FEDERAL APPLIANCE STANDARDS

Administrator	<p>The U.S. Department of Energy's Appliances and Commercial Equipment Standards Program develops test procedures and minimum efficiency standards for residential appliances and commercial equipment.</p>
Application	<p>The Program develops rules and regulations that manufacturers must adhere to in manufacturing products. These regulations apply to products manufactured for sale in, as well as those imported into, the United States. While the minimum energy efficiency standards require manufacturers to discontinue manufacturing products that do not meet the efficiency standards, products manufactured before the effective date of the new standards may still be sold.</p>
History	<p>Through the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975 (EPCA), Congress established a federal energy conservation program for major household appliances by calling for mandatory appliance efficiency standards. However, little progress was made to actually establish standards until the 1980s. By 1986, after several states had adopted standards, appliance manufacturers realized that uniform federal standards were preferable to a variety of state standards. The National Appliance Energy Conservation Act (NAECA) of 1987 established specific initial minimum efficiency standards for many household appliances and established schedules for DOE to review these standards.</p>



Rulemaking Process	Whether a product standard is being developed for the first time or is being revised, the Federal rulemaking development process has historically taken three years from start to finish. The process typically began with a Framework Document, followed about 18 months later with a Preliminary Technical Support Document, then, 12 months later, a Notification of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR), and, after another six months, a Final Rule. The first three steps included agency notice, public workshop meetings and the opportunity for the public to comment. In an effort to expedite this process that included each of the various stages, DOE announced a number of procedural changes in November 2010. In appropriate cases, according to the DOE, we can expect to see preliminary information gathered less formally, and the public rulemaking process begin with the issuance of a proposed rule for public comment. Since these changes are relatively new, we will have to see how the Department determines “appropriate cases”. The Final Rule announces the energy-efficiency standards and their effective date(s), which are typically three years following the publication date. By law, DOE must upgrade standards to the maximum level of energy efficiency that is technically feasible and economically justified. DOE strives to establish standards that maximize consumer benefits and minimize negative impacts on manufacturers and others.
Legislation	Over the years, standards have been adopted/updated through not only the DOE rulemaking process but through legislation as well. Several pieces of energy legislation have bypassed the rulemaking process and established specific new levels for various products with specific effective dates. Others have directed DOE to conduct specific product rulemakings.

STATE APPLIANCE STANDARDS

	For products covered under the DOE's Standards Program, these Federal energy efficiency requirements for specific products generally preempt State laws or regulations concerning energy conservation testing, labeling, and standards. However, individual states still have the authority to adopt and implement state level appliance standards for products that do not fall under the federal program. In the cases where a state has adopted a standard for a product that is already regulated by the Energy Conservation Program and is more stringent than the federal standard, EPCA provides the ability of states to petition for an exemption from federal preemption and implement its own State regulation. In most cases of states adopting appliance standards, they have been adopted legislatively and implemented by an identified state agency.
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[Please contact David Lis at djlis@neep.org or 781-860-9177 X 127 for more information.](mailto:djlis@neep.org)