

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

iv. Appliance and Equipment Efficiency Standards

Description

State appliance standards establish minimum energy-efficiency levels for those appliances and other energy-consuming products that are not already covered by the federal government. These standards typically prohibit the sale of less efficient models within a state. States are finding that appliance standards offer a cost-effective strategy for improving energy efficiency and lowering energy costs for businesses and consumers, although these standards are superseded when federal standards are enacted for new product categories.

While state appliance standards can be useful in testing and exploring the effectiveness of standards for new products, states cannot preempt or supersede existing federal standards. States may apply to DOE for a waiver to implement more stringent standards. This is sometimes granted if a certain period of time has passed since the federal standard has been updated.

Policy Mechanics

Design

When states implement appliance and equipment standards, they are establishing a minimum efficiency for products, such as refrigerators or air conditioners, thereby reducing the energy associated with using the product. Standards prohibit the production and sale of products less efficient than the minimum requirements, encouraging manufacturers to focus on how to incorporate energy-efficient technologies into their products at the least cost and hastening the development of innovations that bring improved performance.

Authority

State energy offices, which typically administer the federal state energy program funds, have generally acted as the administrative lead for standards implementation. In contrast, inspection and enforcement of appliance standards regulations has typically involved self-policing. Industry competition is such that competitive manufacturers usually report violations.

Obligated Parties

Manufacturers of products being sold in a given state are typically obligated to ensure their appliances meet the appropriate energy efficiency standards.

Measurement and Verification

Evaluating the benefits and costs of the standards is important during the standards-setting process. Once enacted, however, little field evaluation is performed.

Penalties for Noncompliance

Appliances and equipment found in violation of the minimum energy performance standards are not allowed to be sold or manufactured in the state.

Implementation Status

As of March 2016, 16 states and Washington, D.C., have enacted appliance efficiency standards since 2001. However, most of these standards have been superseded by federal standards. Still, 11 states (AZ, CA, CO, CT, NH, MD, OR, GA, TX, RI, WA) and Washington, D.C., have either enacted standards for equipment not covered federally or obtained waivers to enact tougher appliance standards where the federal regulations have become outdated. California currently leads all states in active state standards, covering 17 products, including pool pumps and hot tubs, vending machines, televisions, battery chargers, toilets and urinals, bottle-type water dispensers, faucets, CD and DVD equipment, and various lighting applications.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Appliance Standards Awareness Project, State Standards, accessed March 10, 2016. Available at: <http://www.appliance-standards.org/states>.