

Frequently Asked Questions

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Pertaining to Test Procedures for Microwave Ovens

1. What is the purpose of this notice?

In this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“NOPR”), the U.S. Department of Energy (“DOE”) proposes an amended test procedure for microwave ovens to (1) require explicitly that the clock display always be left on during testing regardless of manufacturer instructions or default configuration, unless the product provides no available setting to prevent the clock display from powering down automatically; (2) require that microwave ovens with connected functionality disable the network function (e.g., Bluetooth or Wi-Fi function) during testing; and (3) correct typographical errors.

This NOPR is part of DOE’s ongoing commitment to consider feedback from all interested stakeholders and promote an open and transparent rulemaking process.

2. What type of information is the Department looking for?

In this NOPR, DOE proposed to amend its test procedures for microwave ovens to (1) require explicitly that the clock display always be left on during testing regardless of manufacturer instructions or default configuration, unless the product provides no available setting to prevent the clock display from powering down automatically; (2) require that microwave ovens with connected functionality disable the network function (e.g., Bluetooth or Wi-Fi function) during testing; and (3) correct typographical errors. DOE is requesting comment on these proposals in this NOPR.

3. What is a microwave oven?

Microwave ovens are household cooking appliances that consist of a compartment designed to cook or heat food by means of microwave energy. The most common type of microwave oven is a countertop configuration with electronic controls, including a clock display.

4. How much energy do microwave ovens consume?

On average, a single microwave oven consumes 166 kWh per year of electricity. At the time of the final rule in the previous energy conservation standards rulemaking in 2013, microwave ovens used 0.65 quads per year of primary energy, which accounted for about 0.3 percent of residential electricity use and 0.06 percent of total U.S. energy use at that time. DOE estimated that approximately 15 percent of this energy use occurs in standby mode and off mode.

5. How many SPVUs are shipped annually in the United States?

The estimated annual shipments in 2017 were 13.4 million.

6. Who are the parties that may be interested in this notice?

Interested parties include manufacturers, trade associations, distributors, energy utilities, state agencies, international organizations, and consumer, energy, and environmental advocacy groups.

7. How does an interested party comment on this notice and when are comments due?

The comment period for this rule will be 60 days, beginning on the date in which this document publishes in the *Federal Register*. Interested parties may submit comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> or via email to MWO2017TP0024@ee.doe.gov, identified with docket number EERE–2017–BT–TP–0024. Comments may also be submitted via postal mail or hand delivery by following the instructions found in the document.