

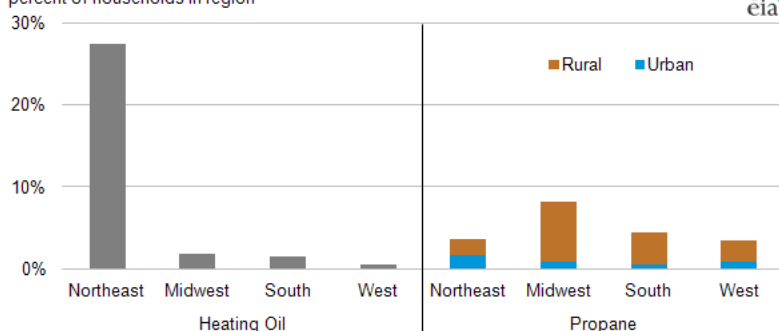


Today in Energy

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Beyond natural gas and electricity; more than 10% of U.S. homes use heating oil or propane

Many Northeastern homes rely on heating oil; propane heats homes in rural America, 2009
percent of households in region



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, [Residential Energy Consumption Survey 2009](#).

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While almost 85% of households in the United States heat with natural gas or electricity, more than 10% rely on heating oil or propane, according to the 2009 [Residential Energy Consumption Survey](#). The shares of heating oil and propane are likely to remain small but significant in the U.S. residential heating mix. These fuels serve distinct populations—heating oil primarily serves households in the Northeast, while propane serves households in rural areas across the country.

Over 80% of homes that rely on heating oil for space heating are located in the Northeast. Also, heating oil is most commonly used in older homes, as about one-half of all homes that currently use heating oil were built before 1950. Generally, homes built since 1980 are not heated with heating oil, except in the Northeast. The survey data show that heating oil equipment is older than average but more likely to be regularly maintained than other types of heating equipment, providing some potential efficiency benefits.

Propane space heating has broader geographic distribution than heating oil, heating between 3% and 8% of households in every region. Across the country, propane use is most common in rural areas and mobile homes. About 83% of households with propane heating are located in rural areas that are typically beyond the reach of the natural gas distribution infrastructure. In the Midwest, the rural share is greater than 90%. Additionally, those living in mobile homes are twice as likely to heat with propane as those in other housing unit types. Propane is becoming more common in the Northeast; of homes built in this region between 2000 and 2009, equal amounts are heated with propane and heating oil.