

Frequently Asked Questions

Request for Information pertaining to Energy Conservation Standards for Microwave Ovens

1. What is the purpose of this notice?

This Request for Information (RFI) initiates the review process outlined by the Energy Policy and Conservation Act and seeks input from the public to assist DOE with its determination about whether new and/or amended energy conservation standards are warranted for microwave ovens.

Information received in response to this request will help DOE determine whether amending the energy efficiency requirements for microwave ovens would result in significant energy savings and whether such standards would be technologically feasible and economically justified.

This RFI 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 RFI, DOE requests feedback on the current microwave oven product classes and whether changes to these individual product classes and their descriptions should be made or whether certain classes should be merged or separated (such as separating microwave-only and countertop convection microwave ovens into separate product classes). Additionally, DOE seeks information regarding any other new or revised product classes it should consider for inclusion in its analysis in the event that the microwave oven test procedure addresses active mode energy use, including a potential integrated energy use metric. DOE also requests input on any expected market trends for any new features, such as the potential for "smart" inter-connected microwave ovens, which may impact total energy consumption.

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 microwave ovens are shipped annually in the United States?

The estimated annual shipments in 2017 were 13.4 million. The current National impact models estimate that there will be 12.871 million shipments in 2019; with 12.742 million coming from product class 1 and 0.129 million from product class 2.

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 45 days, beginning on the date in which this notice 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 MWO2017STD0023@ee.doe.gov, identified with docket number EERE-2017-BT-STD-0023. Comments may also be submitted via postal mail or hand delivery by following the instructions found in the notice.