



## Choosing Electronics Carefully Can Bring Happiness During and After the Holidays

By Tom Lienhard, PE, CEM

Holidays are the time of year when consumers buy new televisions and other electronics, not realizing the significant impact they can have on a home's annual energy use. Knowing the energy use of the television you're considering can help you make a smart choice.

### Energy Forward – Engineered to be Most Efficient

Northwest consumers shopping for new electronics should look for a bright orange "Energy Forward" icon, indicating electronics that are at least 30 percent more energy efficient than the ENERGY STAR threshold. More information on the Energy Forward line is available at [www.energyefficientelectronics.org](http://www.energyefficientelectronics.org).

### Things to think about before purchasing a new TV

Did you know that it *is* possible for your television to be too big? According to the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (NEEA), viewing experience actually diminishes if sitting too close to a very large high definition screen, particularly in small or moderately sized rooms. A rule of thumb for optimum viewing distance is you should be twice the distance away from the TV as the diagonal size of the screen. If you have a 48 inch TV, you should be 96 inches or 8 feet away.

Television size also matters in energy usage. On average, a 52-inch LCD television uses twice the energy as a 32-inch LCD, according to an energy efficiency study by the technology website CNET. Also, a plasma television can use 1.75 times the energy of an equally-sized LCD television from the same manufacturer. For more energy savings, use the home mode setting. One caution, buying a High Definition (HD) television does not in itself give you HD viewing. Paying for the signal or installing an HD antenna may also be necessary. TV Energy comparisons are available at CNET's website <http://reviews.cnet.com/green-tech/tv-consumption-chart/?tag=lna>.

### Control the electronics you have.

Newer televisions don't use a lot of "phantom" power - power that is used even when the television is turned off. However some devices associated with your television use energy continuously because they never turn off. A high definition cable set-top box with DVR uses 350-kilowatt hours of electricity per year, more than most home appliances. Don't forget the surround sound amplifier and the DVD player. To help reduce phantom use, check online for smart plug strips that will turn off peripherals when it sees the main device is shut off.

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