PLUMBER PROS — GUIDE

Water heater replacement costs: compare the full scope

Use a dated US cost reference, then get a local written quote that covers the full job.

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A water heater price can mean the appliance alone or a complete installed job. Ask which one the quote describes. Do not compare a unit price with an installed price.

A dated reference, not a quote

This Old House, in its water heater installation cost article accessed 2026-11-10, reports a US average of $1,950. It gives installed tank costs of $1,200 to $2,300 and tankless costs of $2,100 to $4,000. These amounts are US dollars. The article attributes its cost estimates to national averages from The Home Depot. They are broad editorial estimates, not a price offered by any plumber in this directory. Do not add the article's separate component ranges together as if they form a quote.

These figures do not establish a Canadian price. Ask a local contractor for a quote in Canadian dollars for a Canadian job. Do not turn a US range into a Canadian estimate with an exchange rate.

Give each contractor the same brief

Send the existing model label, fuel type, location and photos of the access route. Ask the contractor to inspect the site before treating a quote as final. Say whether you want a direct replacement or a change in fuel or location. Ask for the proposed model and its capacity rating.

Compare these lines

- Appliance model and supply cost.
- Removal and disposal of the existing unit.
- Water connections, shutoff valves and required fittings.
- Any gas, electrical or venting work.
- Permit and inspection arrangements for your address.
- Work needed to protect floors and provide safe access.
- Tax, payment schedule, warranty and exclusions.

Do not assume a short quote includes all these items. Ask the contractor to mark each as included, excluded or subject to inspection.

Control changes

Ask for a written change process before work starts. If the contractor finds a hidden problem,

ask for a description, photos where practical, and the price before approving extra work. Keep the original scope and each approved change together.

Compare operation as well as installation

DOE's Energy Saver guide recommends looking at the EnergyGuide and ENERGY STAR labels when choosing a replacement. Ask the installer to explain how the proposed model fits your use and site. Do not assume a lower equipment price gives the lowest operating cost.

Sources

Checked 2026-11-10. These pages can change.

- This Old House: Water Heater Installation Cost, accessed 2026-11-10.
- US Department of Energy: Energy Saver Guide, July 2022, water heating section, accessed 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Is this a quote for my home?

No. The dated US figures are background only. Ask a contractor for a written quote for your address and scope.