

Front-loading washers provide water and energy savings

By JAIME DIRKES

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Up until a few years ago, washers and dryers that loaded from the front could only be seen at the local Laundromat. This has changed with the advent of front-loading machines for the residential market. Front-loading washers and dryers use less water, hold more loads and save more energy in the process.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average household washes close to 400 loads of laundry each year, which consumes around 13,500 gallons of water. Most front-loading washers are Energy Star certified and save 7,000 gallons of water a year. This would translate to a savings of about \$14 a year on your water bill, whether you are a City of Grand Junction, Ute Water, Clifton Water or Town of Palisade water customer. Although these machines cost a bit more initially, they use 40 to 60 percent less water and as much as 50 percent less energy than the regular top-loading machine. A typical top-loading washer uses about 40 gallons of water per full load. In contrast, a full-size front-loading washer uses between 20 and 25 gallons. Because they use less water, they also use less energy to heat that water, which will save you money on electricity or gas. Unlike the traditional top-loading machine (which uses a vertical agitator), the front-loading washer uses horizontal tubes that bounce clothes during the wash cycle. Since there is not a bulky agitator in the middle of a front-loading machine, the extra space allows you to more effectively wash sleeping bags or large throw rugs. The wash cycle is considerably gentler on laundered items and allows for less tangled laundry.

A typical top-loading machine spins at 500 rpm. Front-loading washers can spin twice as fast, at 1,000 rpm. This increased speed reduces the amount of water left on clothes after a wash and reduces drying time, which in turns saves on energy used to dry clothes.

Not only are these washers great for saving water and energy, they also can save space. Front-loading washers and dryers can be stacked one on top of the other to free up room around the house. If you are considering purchasing a new washer or dryer for your home and you wish to cut back on water use and save energy, look into the new front-loading Energy Star efficient machines.

We live in a semiarid climate where droughts will always be a part of our environment. Water for our future means conserving now. The Drought Response Information Project (DRIP) is a collaboration between the valley's domestic water utilities and CSU Cooperative Extension to provide information and educate the public about drought and the importance of water conservation.