

Hot Water Recirculation Pump Frequently Asked Questions

What is a hot water recirculation pump?

Hot water recirculation pumps reduce wait times for hot water to arrive at showerheads and taps, saving water and money. The pumps pull hot water from a water heater, while simultaneously sending cool water back to be reheated and reused. Pumps are either installed at water heaters or under kitchen or bathroom sinks that have electrical outlets.

What do the pump kits include?

Hot water recirculating pumps typically are sold as kits and include a recirculation pump, timer or activation device, hose, adapter and a comfort/aquastatic valve. For pumps installed in multi-unit properties, more than one comfort valve and other materials may be needed. The SFPUC does not recommend specific brands.

Do I need a plumber, or can I install one myself?

Installation does not require a plumbing permit and the pumps are designed to be installed by property owners. However, while not necessary in all situations, you may want to consult with a plumber or plumbing retail professional for guidance on the best system for your home. See some installation videos [here](#) and [here](#).

To further increase energy and water savings, insulating hot water pipes is a simple method of saving more. Here's a link on how to do it. [Do-It-Yourself Savings Project: Insulate Hot Water Pipes | Department of Energy](#)

Do I need a new water heater to install a pump?

A hot water recirculating pump will work with your existing water heater, but old or leaking water heaters may need repairs or replacement before installing a hot water recirculating pump.

If you are looking to significantly reduce your home's fossil fuel gas consumption, consider replacing your existing water heater with a new heat pump water heater. [Generous rebates are available](#) from Bay Area Regional Energy Network (BayREN). Hot water recirculating pumps can be installed on new heat pump water heaters.

Do hot water pumps waste energy?

Running a hot water recirculating pump continuously will use more energy. We recommend using timers or smart devices to ensure that hot water is available when wanted without wasting energy.

Does your rebate cover the purchase of tankless water heaters?

No, this rebate is only for **hot water recirculating pumps**. Tankless water heaters can work with certain recirculation pumps. Please consult with a plumbing professional to identify the appropriate recirculation pump system for your water heater.