



Water heater age cheat sheet

Find the rating plate · read the build date · compare with typical life · check recalls

1 Find the plate

2 Read the date

3 Typical life

4 Recalls

5 What the age means

1 Find the rating plate



- **The rating plate is a label on the side of the tank:** model number, serial number and the gas or electrical ratings.
- Gas tanks: often next to the gas control valve (A.O. Smith, per CPSC). Whirlpool: near the bottom of the heater.
- **Don't remove covers or panels to reach it.** On electric models the access panels hide wiring.
- Many newer plates **print the manufacture date.** If yours does, use it: a printed date beats a decoded one.

Record before you check

Photograph the whole plate. The model number is for recall matching; the serial carries the build date.

Brand	Model number	Serial number	Gas / electric / tankless
Printed date (if any)	Decoded build date	Age (years)	Recall check result

2 Read the build date (highlighted characters)

Bradford White

1st letter = year · 2nd letter = month

DH9477405

D = 2007 · H = August

Year letters (repeat every 20 years; add or subtract 20):

A 2004 B 2005 C 2006 D 2007 E 2008
 F 2009 G 2010 H 2011 J 2012 K 2013
 L 2014 M 2015 N 2016 P 2017 S 2018
 T 2019 W 2020 X 2021 Y 2022 Z 2023

8 digits after the letters = about Dec 2007 or later; 7 = earlier (our reading of Bradford White's rule).

A.O. Smith · State · Reliance · American · Whirlpool · Kenmore

From about 2008: first 4 digits = year, then week

1210A002243

2012 · week 10 (March)

Before about 2008 (A.O. Smith, State, Kenmore):
 month letter + 2-digit year · **L07A071460** = Nov 2007.
 A.O. Smith before mid-2004: two letters, the 2nd is the month · **MD91...** = Apr 1991
 American and Whirlpool: year + week before 2008 too · **9843113460** = week 43 of 1998

Rheem · Ruud · Richmond · GE tanks (mid-1999 to about 2016)

Skip brand letters; next 4 digits = month, then year

RH 0806B17262

August 2006

From 2012 at some plants: plant letter (A W Q M C) + week + year · **M141209135** = week 14 of 2012.
 GE tanks from 2017 on: use the printed date. A Kenmore whose plate names Rheem: use this code.

Month letters (A–M, no I)

A Jan B Feb C Mar D Apr
 E May F Jun G Jul H Aug
 J Sep K Oct L Nov M Dec

Bradford White's 2nd letter; older A.O. Smith / State / Kenmore code.

Week number → month (approx.)

1–4 Jan 5–8 Feb 9–13 Mar
 14–17 Apr 18–22 May 23–26 Jun
 27–30 Jul 31–35 Aug 36–39 Sep
 40–43 Oct 44–48 Nov 49–53 Dec

Weeks can shift by one depending on the year.

More brands

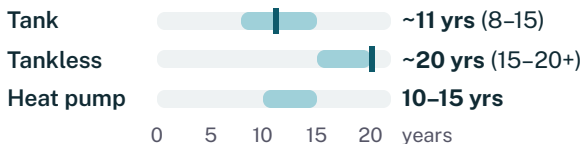
Lochinvar tanks: from 2011, year + week (**1142N012345** = wk 42, 2011); 1979–2011, Bradford White's year + month letters (**KJ-1000130** = Sep 1993; pre-1993 years our inference)

Navien (tankless, 15 characters): characters 6–10 = year, month (1–9, X = Oct; Y, Z = Nov, Dec per inspectors), day (**7414C14X1771143** = Oct 17, 2014); 2008–10 labels print the date (e.g. 20081208)

Rinnai (tankless): 1st letter = year (A = 2009, no I O Q U V), 2nd = month (**NK . CA-129326** = Oct 2021)

Others: printed date or maker's lookup.

3 Typical lifespan



Tank figures cover gas and electric. Bar = where most published figures fall; tank mark = our summary figure; tankless mark = DOE's ~20. Sources: US DOE, NAHB 2007, InterNACHI, A.O. Smith, Rheem, Bradford White, Consumer Reports. Not a prediction for one heater.

4 Check recalls

Go to **appliancecheckup.com/appliance-recall-check** and enter the model number: it searches U.S. CPSC recall notices, including water heaters, and links the official notice. Then search the model at **cpsc.gov/Recalls** and on the maker's recall page, and confirm the serial range on the official notice. No match is not proof of safety.

5 What the age means (tank)

Under about 8 years: early to middle of a typical tank's life.

About 10 years or more: the makers suggest planning a replacement. It may keep going.

Past about 15 years: older than even the longer published figures.

Averages; care, water and use matter. Signs the makers list for a licensed plumber to check: water at the tank base, rusty hot water, rumbling or popping.



Scan to decode the serial and check recalls

appliancecheckup.com/how-old-is-my-water-heater

Basis: date codes from Bradford White's chart, CPSC recall notices (A.O. Smith group, Navien), Rheem Technical Service Bulletin 1207, Lochinvar's serial guide, American's warranty and, for Rinnai, industry references; examples from those and inspection references. Every figure is sourced at appliancecheckup.com/how-old-is-my-water-heater/. Estimates from published data: not an inspection, warranty or appraisal.

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