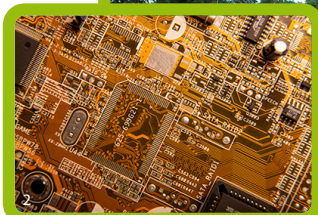


New appliances - economical and therefore good for environment and climate?

"New appliances are more economical than old ones - and therefore also good for the environment and the climate." You hear this a lot. Unfortunately, it is only partly true. On the one hand, you have to consider whether the savings are really that great, and on the other, the production of new appliances and the disposal of old ones have a significant impact on the environment. That is why we should use working appliances as long as possible and repair broken ones! If all household appliances in the EU were used for one year longer (than is currently the case), four million tonnes of carbon dioxide could be saved each year!¹



The production of appliances requires raw materials. Mines for copper, iron, bauxite (aluminium) and other metals destroy forests and pollute water. People and animals lose their habitat.



Turning oil into plastics and ores into metal products releases many pollutants. Making a fridge, washing machine and other electrical appliances also requires a lot of electricity in factories. Much of this electricity is produced by burning coal, especially in Asia (where most appliances come from).



Toxic waste is produced during the manufacturing process. This waste is often dumped untreated into the environment. In addition, huge amounts of toxic marine diesel are burned during the long transport to Europe (4 - 6 weeks). A large container ship burns over 6 tonnes of it – **per hour!**²

Disposal – an environmental problem



Not only is the new appliance an environmental problem. The old one also has to be disposed of. Although metals and plastics can be recycled almost completely in Austria, there are three problems:

- Recycling also uses energy
- Old electrical appliances often contain toxic substances that are difficult to remove
- The amount of electronic waste is growing rapidly

In recent years, there have been repeated reports of illegal exports of waste to Asia and Africa, where electrical equipment is dismantled - often by children. For example, strong acids are used to separate parts, or plastic parts are burned. Protective clothing is rarely used, and unusable waste ends up in open dumps. This treatment of electronic waste is extremely harmful to people and the environment!

Repair instead of new!

It is often possible to repair a broken appliance. Before buying a new one, this possibility should be considered. The Austrian government supports repairs with the so-called repair bonus - Reparatur Bonus (as of summer 2023). If you have your appliance repaired by a specialist, a large part of the costs will be reimbursed! For details see:

<https://www.reparaturbonus.at/>



When is it worth buying a new appliance – financially and for the environment and climate?

A new appliance is worth buying if the old one uses a lot more electricity than the new one. To find out how much energy the old appliance uses, it has to be measured. Refrigerators are monitored over several days, while washing machines are measured per wash cycle. The readings can then be compared with the information provided by the manufacturer of a new appliance. Simple electricity meters can be bought second-hand for 10-20 euros or by mail order. If you would like to know more about measuring the electricity consumption of electrical appliances, feel free to contact EB Plus.



Illustrations:

- 1 Photoangel / Freepik
- 2 Freepik
- 3 kakteen / shutterstock
- 4 Artic_photo / shutterstock
- 5 Gts / shutterstock
- 6 wonderisland / shutterstock
- 7 callmetak / Freepik
- 8 Freepik
- 9 Gerardo C. Lerne / shutterstock
- 10 zinkevych / Freepik
- 11 EB Plus

Other sources:

- 1 European Environmental Bureau (2019): Coolproducts don't cost the Earth – Report (<https://eeb.org/library/coolproducts-report/>)
- 2 Domizlaff, Svante (2013). Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (online). 28.3.2013. Einmal Volltanken für 5,3 Millionen Euro. <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/technik-motor/technik/containerschiffe-einmal-volltanken-fuer-5-3-millionen-euro-12127095-p2.html>

Hergestellt durch EB Plus - Arge Energieberatung und Umweltbildung (www.ebplus.at) im Auftrag der Caritas Österreich 2023. Autor: Jörg Jozwiak. Ermöglicht durch die Förderung der Rexel Austria GmbH.