

A back boiler is a small, compact boiler fitted at the back of an open fireplace hearth. It sits behind a electric fire (or in the chimney breast) and provides hot water and central heating to the property.

Despite its compact size, a back boiler is more than capable of fulfilling all heating and hot water needs. Back boilers are reliable too, and allow homeowners to run hot water from several taps at once without loss of press.

How Back Boiler Works

Back boilers are generally no longer installed unless it is too complicated or too expensive to install a condensing boiler. They are hidden behind the chimney in your home, with a gas fire front to cover them. Although they are usually a reliable type of boiler, they typically have an efficiency rating of only 78%, whereas new, condensing boilers are usually more than 92% efficient - not only better for the environment, but also easier on your pocket. Back boilers are "open flued" which means that there must be an open vent to allow fresh air in to replace the fumes that go up the flue. This means that if a fault develops with the ventilation, flue or boiler itself, potentially lethal gasses can be released.

Advantages of back boiler

Could be cheaper to replace if you already have this system

Reliable - reducing the risk of a breakdown

Space saving if you already have one as it's hidden behind your gas fire

Disadvantages of Back Boiler

New building regulations make it difficult to install a new back boiler due to poor efficiency

Open flue means higher risk of fumes leaking into your home

Space hungry - two tanks are required in the loft and a hot water storage cylinder in the airing cupboard

Limited choice of fire front

Draughty and noisy

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