

SUTHERLAND TABLES

COMPARATIVE DOMESTIC HEATING COST TABLES

The Sutherland Comparative Domestic Heating Cost Tables have been published regularly in various journals and magazines since 1976 and have gained a reputation as an independent and impartial source of fuel and heating cost data. From 1988 the information was published in booklet form containing tables giving separate costing for six regions of the U.K. including Northern Ireland. In 1995 comparative costs for the Republic of Ireland were introduced. More recently, the information has been made available in electronic form, either on CD or via email. Updates are produced twice a year to users who are registered to receive the information. Copyright exists with the publisher and a licence is required to use the information for advertising or promotional purposes.

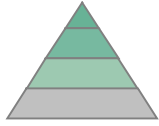
The tables are intended to be used to compare different domestic fuels and the costs of using them under similar conditions. Their primary purpose is not the prediction of actual operating costs in any particular dwelling, although they will of course give an indication of this. The form of the tables is such that the calculation method and data used can be seen and understood by readers. The quantity of fuel used in each area has been adjusted to take account of their different climatic conditions.

The tables provide information on the cost of heating an individual room by all common means ranging from open and closed solid fuel appliances through gas and electric heaters to fixed and portable LPG heaters. Also covered are space and water heating of three sizes of house, namely, two bedroom terraced house, three bedroom semi-detached house and four bedroom detached house. The means of heating include solid fuel in its various forms, through electricity in both peak and off-peak appliances, gas, LPG and oil.

For all these applications an average fuel purchasing cost is given. This is converted into a cost per useful kWh by using a factor for the heat content of the fuel and space and water heating system efficiencies. Any standing charges and other costs are added when the cost per useful kWh is multiplied by the regional fuel usage in order to produce nominal annual running costs.

For all except the electric systems the central heating installations are assumed to be of the normal low pressure hot water type with a boiler serving radiators and domestic hot water cylinder. The heating circulation systems, excepting those for the solid fuel open fire, room heater and gravity feed boilers, are fully pumped, i.e. they will have cylinder and room thermostats both acting on a motorised valve or valves. The solid fuel systems have gravity circulation to the hot water storage cylinder and pumped circulation to the radiators. The electric heating system consists of storage heaters for the ground floor and oil filled electric radiators for the upper floor. An immersion heater in a cylinder is used for electric hot water production.

The system efficiencies were selected after much careful consideration in conjunction with all the fuel authorities whose co-operation is gratefully acknowledged. The calculation method used does have some drawbacks in that there are aspects of it that may not always truly reflect the manner in which fuel is consumed in domestic heating systems. We feel, however, that over-refinement of the tables is to be avoided. They are intended to be used for comparison of fuel costs and they are generally accurate enough for that purpose. We are always pleased to consider suggestions made by users for improvements to the manner in which the information is calculated and displayed.



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As from May 2006 the Comparative Domestic Heating Costs are being produced and marketed under the familiar and trusted name of SUTHERLAND TABLES. The new publishers, DPW Associates, will continue to develop the publication that has become a standard work of reference for those interested in domestic heating. All orders, registrations and licences will be dealt with from our email addresses info@sutherlandtables.co.uk and sales@sutherlandtables.co.uk

The Domestic Heating Comparative Costs have been available to registered subscribers twice yearly in either of three formats, namely hard copy book form, mailed CD or e-mailed. As the new publishers, we are in the process of moving to a web-based delivery service, which we believe will be a more efficient (and sustainable!) means of production and also more convenient for subscribers. This service should be up and running in time for the October 06 issue. For the current issue (May 06) we are providing the tables via mailed CDs. Subscribers can then print off parts of the tables as required, though please note the conditions regarding use for advertising or promotional purposes.

Organisations which provide fuel cost data will still be entitled to receive a complimentary copy.

The format and content of the tables themselves will remain basically the same in the immediate term. However, we shall be analysing the underlying algorithms and assumptions used for the calculation of heating costs to determine whether any updates and other improvements should be made.

Two particular issues which have been raised concern the assumptions of system efficiencies and the fabric thermal performance, which are based on standards from the mid-to-late Eighties, the period during which the Tables were first published in booklet form. While it may be argued that the Tables still provide a valid means of relative comparison of different fuels, nevertheless we shall be looking at these issues and other ways of bringing the tables more up to date.

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