

How Long Will It Last?

How nice it would be if we had a crystal ball to tell us how long the systems, appliances, and building materials in our home would last! Unfortunately, this is the "real world" and no such item exists. The next best bet is to consult the following list of "Life Expectancies for Residential Equipment and Materials." It will give a good idea of how long these items typically last.

The ranges below may vary a little based on a number of factors, including:

1. Quality of the equipment and/or materials.
2. Proper application and/or use of the equipment and materials.
3. The proper capacities of the equipment and/or materials.
4. Varying amounts and type of usage.
5. Exposure to different weather and geographical conditions.
6. Quality of fuels, water, and air to which the equipment is exposed.
7. Future high-tech equipment, materials, and applications (that may increase or decrease life expectancies).
8. Quality of workmanship used in the installation.

HEATING SYSTEMS	YEARS
Boilers	
Cast iron	30 to 60
Steel	20 to 35
Heating Exchangers (steel)	
Gas-fired	15 to 20
Oil-fired	20 to 35
Heat Pump Compressor	7 to 12
Heating Pipes	
Steel	80 to 120
Copper	60 to ?
Burners	
Oil	20 to 30
Gas	30 to 40
Misc. Heating Components	
Circulators	20 to 30
Fans	12 to 40
Oil Tanks (inside)	25 to 50
Expansion Tanks	35 to 50
Zone Valves	7 to 10
<i>Note: Heaters need complete replacement when the boiler (water) or heat exchanger (air) fails.</i>	
AIR CONDITIONING	
YEARS	
(Electric)	
Compressors	10 to 14
Coils	20 to 30
Fans	12 to 40
PLUMBING SYSTEMS	
YEARS	
Water Service (Public)	
Lead	50 to 90
Steel	40 to 75

Copper	70 to ?
<i>Plastic (Should be dependable) Unknown Interior Water Pipe</i>	
Steel 1/2"	40 to 60
Copper 1/2"	70 to 100
<i>Plastic (Should be dependable) Unknown Drainage Lines</i>	
Galvanized Steel	40 to 60
Copper	60 to 100
Cast Iron	50 to 90
Plastic (P.V.C.)	35 to ?
Lead	50 to 90
<i>Well Equipment</i>	
<i>(On-site Water Supply)</i>	
Pump-Submersible	15 to 22
Pump-Above Ground	13 to 20
Pressure Tank-Steel	15 to 25
Pressure Tank - Fiberglass	25 to 50
<i>Septic System</i>	
<i>(On-Site Drainage System)</i>	
Steel Tank	15 to 30
Concrete Tank	25 to 40
<i>NOTE: Life expectancy of leaching fields is determined by porosity of soil and maintenance (10 to 60 years)</i>	
<i>Miscellaneous Plumbing Items</i>	
<i>Water Heater</i>	
Gas	8 to 14
Electric	12 to 18
Oil Burner	20 to 40
<i>Fixtures</i>	
Builders line faucets, etc.	20 to 35
Builders line tub, toilets & sinks	40 to 60
Better quality faucets, etc.	30 to 60
Better quality tubs, toilets & sinks	50 to 90
ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS	
YEARS	
Service cables (depends on exposure to sun)	20 to 40
<i>Wiring (interior)</i>	
Knob & tube (cloth insulation, copper conductor)	60 to 90
Armored Cable (copper conductor-BX)	50 to 80
Plastic sheathed (copper conductor-Romex)	70 to Unknown (It should be 80+.)
<i>Panel Boxes</i>	
Fuses or Circuit Breakers	20 to 50
<i>Note: Life expectancy is directly related to moisture in the area of the box (rust & oxidation of contacts).</i>	
EXTERIOR COMPONENTS	
YEARS	

Roof Covering	
Fiberglass Reinforced Asphalt Shingles	18 to 25
<i>Note: Roofs wear out sooner on the south side of the house.</i>	
Built-Up Roofing, 3- or 4-ply	10 to 15
<i>Note: Installation procedures and regular recoating can extend the life of these roofs 2, 3 or more times.</i>	
Slate (depends on the quarry from which it came)	35 to 200 (Maintenance is required.)
Metal Standing or Welded Seams	50 to 90
<i>Note: Metal roofs are mostly tin and will remain functional as long as you keep them from rusting -- recoat every 4 to 5 years.</i>	
Cedar (depends on quality of wood, workmanship, and maintenance)	20 to 40
Gutters and Downspouts	
<i>Note: Life expectancies of gutters and spouts depend to some extent on the slope of the gutters and how clean they are.</i>	
Aluminum (gauge of metal is important)	18 to 20
Galvanized (the new painted steel should last longer)	15 to 22
Copper (do not use steel brackets)	35 to 50
Plastic (P.V.C.)	25 to ?
Sidings and Veneers	
Aluminum (you may repaint aluminum siding at about 20-23 years to extend life)	18-25
Vinyl	25 to ?
Aluminum with Tedlar coating	35 to 50
Hardboard or composition (depends on finish, exposure to sun and maintenance)	20 to 40
T1-11 Plywood Siding (must receive regular coatings or will not last more than 8 years)	20 to 40
Stucco (70 years without paint, 200+ years with regular painting)	70 to 200+
Asbestos (needs normal maintenance, recommended painting)	40 to 100
Brick. Veneers or complete masonry units. As long as the brick is an exterior brick, it will only need periodic pointing.	100+
Masonry Walls	
Concrete. Brick	(see sidings above) block and stone
<i>Note: Masonry walls are very durable and as long as they are designed properly and receive periodic maintenance, they should last 100+ years. Exceptions would be salmon brick, cinder block (instead of concrete block) and Serpentine stone.</i>	
Windows	
Wood. Usually very dependable and have long life expectancies with regular painting and storm windows to help protect them.	35 to 100
Aluminum. Usually are marginal in design and functionality. An advantage is their low cost.	10 to 25

Vinyl. Reasonable window, moderate cost, not enough history to project life expectancy.	15 to ?
Aluminum storm windows	30 to 40
INTERIORS	
YEARS	
<i>Ceramic Tile (in tub or shower wall areas)</i>	
Wed Bed (cement) or Wonder Board Backing	40 to 90
Mastic System (adhesive)	14 to 20
<i>Plaster</i>	
Walls	70 to 120
Ceilings	60 to 90
<i>Note: Life expectancy of plaster is altered by the carpentry framing and the type of plaster lath used.</i>	
<i>Drywall (also called sheetrock)</i>	
Walls	50 to ?
Ceilings	30 to ?
<i>Note: Not enough history to project the life expectancies.</i>	
APPLIANCES	
YEARS	
Refrigerators	10 to 20
Dishwashers	13 to 18
Gas Ranges	20 to 35
Electric Ranges	15 to 25
Garbage Disposal	10 to 15
Humidifiers (Note: 2 years without maintenance.)	5 to 20
Dehumidifiers	8 to 12
Washers	10 to 20
Dryers	10 to 20