
What is a cylinder thermostat?

... an explanation for householders

A cylinder thermostat switches on and off the heat supply from the boiler to the hot-water cylinder. It works by sensing the temperature of the water inside the cylinder, switching on the water heating when the temperature falls below the thermostat setting, and switching it off once this set temperature has been reached.



Turning a cylinder thermostat to a higher setting will not make the water heat up any faster. How quickly the water heats up depends on the design of the heating system, for example, the size of boiler and the heat exchanger inside the cylinder.

The water heating will not work if a time switch or programmer has switched it off. And the cylinder thermostat will not always switch the boiler off, because the boiler sometimes needs to heat the radiators.

Cylinder thermostats are usually fitted between one quarter and one third of the way up the cylinder. The cylinder thermostat will have a temperature scale marked on it, and it should be set at between 60C and 65C, then left to do its job. This temperature is high enough to kill off harmful bacteria in the water, but raising the temperature of the stored hot water any higher will result in wasted energy and increase the risk of scalding.

If you have a boiler control thermostat, it should always be set to a higher temperature than that of the cylinder thermostat. In most boilers, a single boiler thermostat controls the temperature of water sent to both the cylinder and radiators, although in some there are two separate boiler thermostats.