

The common acceptance of a serial number using a week-week-year-year convention really is not so common. Other conventions that I've found:

1. month-month-year-year - 1202 would be December 2002
2. year-year-week-week - 0252 would be the 52nd week of 2002
3. month-date-year-year - 9902 would be either September 9, 2002, or September 29, 2002, depending on how the company was determining its work weeks that year (labor unions get involved in those things with their work week contracts)
4. date-month-year-year - See #3 above
5. year-year-month-date - 0299 as an example; see #3 above
6. year-year-date-month - 0299 as an example; see #3 above

In formats 3 through 6, when the date is two digits, the last digit of the two-digit date is the one shown in the serial number. So when looking up the dates, if the single digit does not fall on a Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, look for any date in the month that ends in the number and falls on one of those three days; Sunday seems to be most prevalent. Serial numbers for the unions that I am familiar with due to family history always used Saturday or Sunday as the ending of a work week or Monday as the beginning, depending on how many religious people got involved (Sunday was a day or rest) and whether one thought "ending" was more negative than "beginning." Alas, unions used to be so wonderful (insert sarcasm here).

I don't put the month in my report unless the month is actually written out using the alphabet. I just go with the year, but even that can be problematic at times.

Decades ago, when there were only five water heater manufacturers, everyone seemed to use the same serial number convention. Now that there are several dozen different manufacturers and/or brands, there seem to be more and more numbering conventions in use.

Also, if you can't determine the date, or can't find the date, note the ANSI date. Typically, water heaters are manufactured within three years of the ANSI date, although I have found some up to five years newer than the ANSI date (A.O. Smith is the most lax in this respect). For example, if the manufacturer's plate states "ANSI 1989," you can state that the water heater was manufactured in "1989 or up to five years thereafter," or something similar.

One has to be kind of careful here in the beginning of the 21st century, since if one uses the w-w-y-y convention, one could come up with an early 2004 manufacture date that actually should have been an early 2001 manufacture date using the y-y-w-w convention; for example, 0104592282 could be a 2001 or a 2004 model. So never hesitate to put all the clues together: ANSI date, structure construction date, and construction date of other appliances.

Here are examples from my inspections. I'll put the month only when I'm absolutely certain (in other words, when the month was actually stated as January, February, etc., and not coded). I'll continue updating this document as time goes by.

American Appliance Manufacturing

Seems to use the year-year-week-week convention

A864703704 - 1986

A871505627 - 1987

A880512461 - 1988

8803301391 - 1988

8935305911 - 1989

9001300377 - 1990

9152301246 - 1991

09322300556 – 1993 (that is a letter “O” and not a number “0”)

American Water Heater Company

Seems to use the year-year-week-week convention

9835112715 - 1988

9352305127 - 1993

9745350881 - 1997

9803354132 - 1998

9812350568 - 1998

9842351326 - 1998

0226100472 - 2002

0302104249 – January 2003 (stated, which indicates that the 02 means the 2nd week of 2003, a year-year-week-week convention)

0304160742 – 2003 - This would be a hard one if you went with the "standard" convention of "week-week-year-year," which would seem to indicate a January 2004 manufacture date. In actuality, this is a January 2003 manufacture date. Without checking, if you put in your report January 2004, or even just 2004, and it turned out it was a January 2003, or even just 2003, a year's difference could create problems. It's kind of like dating.

When you were 22, dating someone 6 years younger was verboten. When you're 42, dating someone 6 years younger is no big deal. The older the water heater, the less the problem that is created when being off a year or two. The newer the water heater, especially if one is indicating that it is only weeks old, the bigger the problem that being a year off creates.

American Water Heater Group

Seems to use the year-year-week-week convention

9447307205 - 1994

9406316262 - 1994

9509301518 - 1995

0022122946 - 2000

A.O. Smith

This is the most difficult company that I've found. A.O. Smith has a neat web site, <http://www.aosmith.com/>, where you can search sample plates to help determine manufacture dates. Click on Water Heaters, Residential Gas & Electric Water Heaters, Warranty Verification, Warranty Verification Click Here, and Help, and then click through the various sample plates. It's pretty cool, but still doesn't totally solve the problem. The dates I have put are guesses on my part based on other clues (ANSI date, construction date, other appliance manufacture dates).

N62-C-79-43763 – probably 1979; house was constructed in 1980

NG84-12957-Z99 – July 1984

MA86-13506-Z99 – January 1986

MC87-41178-Z99 – March 1987 (supported by ANSI date of 1985)

GG91-0828639-R99 – July 1991 (supported by condo construction date and other appliance manufacture dates)

GH95-2418239-R99 – August 1995

GH99-5092907-R99 – August 1999

GB02-0471373-248E – February 2002

GC02-0505120-248 – March 2002 (supported by SFR construction date and other appliance manufacture dates)

GE03-1562550-248E – May 2003 (stated; a good clue for previous years. House construction date and other appliance manufacture dates also were 2003)

New information at <http://www.hotwater.com/newinfo/inletinformation3.htm>:

The serial number is alpha numeric (has letters & numbers). The first letter determines the plant where the water heater was manufactured. The second letter represents the month. A through M (don't use I) equal January through December.

Automatic Storage Water Heaters

Seems to use the year-year-month-date convention, with Saturday being the end of the work week.

C94421195 – 1994 – April 2 is a Saturday

C95676559 – 1995 – No 67th week; June 17 is a Saturday, July 16 is a Sunday

A?2316979 – unknown – March 1, 1982 is a Monday; March 21, 1982 is a Sunday, March 1, 1992 is a Sunday

Bosch

288 00715 – unknown – Probably 1988?

Bradford White

The first two letters are year and month codes. If you don't have the Bradford White code sheet, email me and I'll send it to you.

HJ9758102 - 1991

PD8981420 – 1997

XK0250931 – 2001

XH5081548 - 2001

YJ1987864 - 2002

ZJ3730593 – 2003

Constellation

840435616 - 1984

Craftsman

850908409 - 1985

General Electric

Note that the first two digits are always somewhere between 01 and 12, seeming to indicate a month-month-year-year convention.

GELN 0299180530 – February 1999

GE 0599 154948 – May 1999

GELN 0799151153 – July 1999

GE 0799115189 – July 1999

GE 1099604241 – October 1999

GE 0100402769 – January 2000

GELN 0500156848 – May 2000

GELN 0600116722 – June 2000

GELN 0700138959 – July 2000

GE 0101273913 – January 2001

GELN 0201153371 – February 2001

GELN 0401405552 – April 2001

GELN 0601108804 – June 2001

GELN 0801111833 – August 2001

GELN 1001117387 – October 2001

GELN 1201138798 – December 2001

GELN 1201124200 – December 2001

GELN 0402431673 – April 2002

GELN 0502118999 – May 2002
GELN 0802203493 – August 2002
GELN 1002138576 – October 2002
GELN 0103429724 – January 2003 (stated, which seems to confirm the month-month-year-year convention)
GELN 0503V43144 – May 2003
GELN 0503Z12038 – May 2003
GELN 0703V11518 - July 2003 (stated)

Kenmore

H79031141 - 1979
A88309729 - 1988
B88516578 02/96 - 1988 - This is interesting; an 02/96 unit maybe? All other clues at the residence indicated 1988, as does regular serial number convention from that time period. May 1 is a Sunday in 1988.
C89626745 - 1989 (“62” probably means February 6 and not the 62nd week, since 2/6 is a Monday in 1989 and there is no 62nd week)
B91666296 – No 66th week. June 16 is a Sunday.
L92549789 – 1992 (May 4 is a Monday, May 24 is a Sunday)
K95137012 - 1995
B99183201 - 1999
G99331853 - 1999
B99381780 – 1999
F99473514 - 1999
J00319267 – 2000

Maytag

L02150035 – 2002 (Not using standard convention. Don’t know what the “15” might refer to since the manufacture date of August 2002 was stated on the plate)

Montgomery Ward

SNN 1283A24297 - 1983

Reliance

Reliance probably used a start-of-the-week date from 1988 through 1995.
E87311640 – 1987 – March 1 is a Sunday, March 21 is a Saturday
F88823943 – 1988 – August 22 is a Monday
H88508996 – 1988 – May 30 is a Monday; October 15 is a Saturday
B89446213 – 1989 – April 24 is a Monday
F90754896 – 1990 – July 15, 1990 is a Sunday; May 7 is a Monday; May 27 is a Sunday
J91864514 – 1991 – August 26, 1991 is a Monday
M92788785 – 1992 – July 18 is a Saturday
J95582765 – 1995 – May 8, 1995 is a Monday, May 28 is a Sunday
M91418659 – 1991 -
G91453539 - 1991
D93657422 – 1993 – June 5 is a Saturday; May 16 is a Sunday
B94400478 - 1994
B95517283 - 1995 - May 1 (51) is a Monday in 1995, but this could also be the 51st week. Depends on that ol’ labor union contract that defines the work week. January 5 of 1995 doesn’t work since it’s a Thursday. This seems to indicate that for 1995, Reliance was using a year-year-month-date convention with Monday being the beginning of the week. This could have been the end of an old union contract that used Monday as the beginning of a work week and used that Monday date in serial numbers. See 1996.

K95978321 – 1995 - September 17 is a Sunday. Hmmm. Previous 1995 uses Monday. Perhaps a new union contract went into effect September 1. There were many unions whose contracts expired on August 31, just prior to Labor Day.

J96131810 – 1996 – January 13 is a Saturday, which doesn't conform to the rest of 1996.

L96698391 - 1996 - June 9 (69) is a Sunday in 1996; September 6 doesn't work since it's a Friday, so this seems to indicate that for 1996, Reliance was using a year-year-month-date convention with Sunday as the end of the week and that Sunday date being in the serial number. See 1995.

E96725047 – 1996 – No 72nd week, but July 22 is a Monday. Note that this is a Monday, but the other 1996 numbers seem to be using Sunday. Error by the union worker in still using the 1995 methodology?

L96989881 - 1996 - This could be a September 1996 or a September 1998 model since there are Saturday and Sunday dates in 1996 ending in 8 and Saturday and Sunday dates in September 1998 ending in 6. Reliance convention seems to indicate 1996, which is what I went with, so it looks like it was manufactured during the week ending September 8 (a Sunday; see other 1996 serial number) in 1996.

I'd be interested in seeing if there were some temporary 30-day union contracts in place during late 1995 and 1996, or some union strikes going on. That might explain the different conventions being used. Could also be mischief or error on the part of the person assigning serial numbers.

B97162237 – 1997 (January 6 is a Monday, January 26 is a Sunday; probably January 26)

A97226900 – 1997 (February 2 is a Sunday)

Rheem

Note that the first two digits are always somewhere between 01 and 12, seeming to indicate a month-month-year-year convention.

R 1284829179 - 1984

0793105498 - 1993

0994100031 - 1994

RN 0996127089 - 1996

1196114603 - 1996

RN 0397128821 - 1997

RHLN 0198134818 - 1998

RHLN 1298143202 - 1998

RHLN 1298115030 - 1998

RRLN 0299013422 - 1999

RHNG 1200202375 - 2000

RHLN 0800137540 - 2000

RHLN 0800137504 - 2000

RHLN 0100F04424 - January 2000 (stated, seeming to confirm the month-month-year-year convention)

RHLN 0201256458 - 2001

RHLN 0201171287 - 2001

RHLN 0301138268 - 2001

RHLN 0501112284 - 2001

RHLN 080113847 - 2001

RUNG 0901103726 - 2001

RHLN 0302132794 - 2002

RHNG 0602121298 - 2002

RHLN 0503V17531 - 2003

Richmond

RM 0798165838 - 1998

RMLN 0501419200 - 2001

Rinnai

03.02-000799 – 2003 (stated)

Ruud

Note that the first two digits are always somewhere between 01 and 12, seeming to indicate a month-month-year-year convention.

RUN 0781M02014 – July 1981

0186C08106 – January 1986

RUN 0687A14019 – June 1987

RUN 0794127282 – July 1994

RULN 0999D00606 – September 1999

RULN 0300208981 – March 2000

RULP 0301151986 – March 2001

RULN 0501209365 – May 2001

RULN 0601426775 – June 2001

RULN 0303V17899 – March 2003

RULN 0403Z02115 - April 2003 (stated, seeming to confirm a month-month-year-year convention)

Sears

A02100586 - 2002

State Industries

One of the funner companies.

L85101900 – 1985 – January 20 is a Sunday

L85101625 – 1985 – Another with January 20

L85620121 – 1985 – No 62nd week and June 2 is a Sunday.

M88875411 – 1988 – Could be 1987. No 88th or 87th weeks in the year. Appears to be the y-y-m-d convention.

In this case, August 7, 1988, is a Sunday, the end of the week. The home also had a late 1988 construction date.

Since it was a standard 40 gallon, gas-fired water heater by a common company, it is unlikely that it sat around the manufacturer's warehouse for a year before being installed in a 1988 house. Therefore, all indications point to a 1988 water heater, which is what we stated. Again, being off a year (1987 or 1988) here is no big deal.

K88403734 - April 1988 - Some would think that this was the 40th week in 1988, which would make it October or so. In actuality, as stated by the manufacturer's plate, this was an April 1988 unit. Look up April 1988, and you'll find that April 10 ("40") is a Sunday, the end of a week.

M89749832 - 1989 - there is no 74th week, but July 24 is a Monday; April 17 also is a Monday.

J91600341 – 1991 - there is no 60th week, but June 30 is a Sunday

G93177836 – 1993 – January 17 is a Sunday

A94611404 - 1994 - June 11 is a Saturday.

F95387384 – 1995 - there is a 38th week, but previous convention seems to go with March 18, which is a Saturday)

J95921026 - 1995 - This appears to be September 2, 1995, a Saturday. However, it could also be in 1992: May 9, a Saturday; or September 5, also a Saturday. So why did I go with 1995? Clues from other things:

Construction date 1996; Cooling condenser, 1995; Furnace, 1995; and Microwave, July 1995. Highly unlikely for this water heater to have sat around the warehouse for 3-4 years, so we went with 1995.

US/Craftmaster Water Heater Company

9824351369 - 1998

I think it would be really interesting to have the time to go pull all the labor union contracts to see how work weeks were defined in each year.