

CONSUMER INFORMATION

Prepare yourself for upcoming changes to furnace standards (350 words)

(NC)—The Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada (HRAI) reports that a new national minimum energy performance standard for residential gas furnaces will go into effect on December 31, 2009. This standard will apply to virtually all gas furnaces sold in Canada and will require a minimum fuel efficiency level of 90%. This level of efficiency is achieved by using well-established “condensing technology”, where the products of combustion are vented through a plastic pipe, most commonly routed through a side wall.

The implementation of this standard is part of Canada’s ongoing efforts to address climate change and improve the environment. Energy efficient furnaces are also cost-effective for consumers. The installation of a condensing gas furnace (minimum 90% efficiency) will result in a fuel consumption and cost reduction of about 12% when compared to furnaces at the current standard. The dollar amount will depend on the house size and heat loss. In addition to these savings, the installation may be eligible for an ecoEnergy Retrofit grant from the federal government and complementary provincial programs in some parts of the country. Additional financial assistance may be available through the home renovation tax credit that was introduced in the federal budget early in 2009.

The first-time installation of a high efficiency gas furnace typically requires changes to the venting system. In some cases, hot water heater venting alterations may be necessary as well. Depending on the home, the additional costs will almost always be offset by future efficiency gains and operating cost savings. There may be some situations, however, where through-wall venting can be more complex. Examples include narrow, attached houses with front and rear obstructions, closely spaced doorways and large windows or full-width porches and/or decks.

If your house is narrow and attached to neighbouring dwellings (on both sides), and your current gas furnace is more than 15 years old, you should consider consulting with a licensed heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) professional who will assess your specific situation and recommend solutions for your home. A listing of qualified professionals can be found on www.hrai.ca.
- News Canada

Take the guesswork out of finding the right heating and cooling contractor (311 words)

(NC)—A challenging economic environment means everyone is looking for opportunities to spend wisely. When it comes to residential or commercial heating, cooling and indoor comfort systems, Canadians can take one easy step to ensure they are choosing contractors with proven credentials, and a track record of reliability and quality.

“Heating, cooling, indoor air and refrigeration technology is more sophisticated than it has ever been. Selecting a licensed and knowledgeable professional contractor can sometimes be daunting. That’s where we can help,” says Mark Boncardo, chair of the Heating Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada (HRAI), the country’s largest HVACR industry trade association.

Residential and commercial heating and cooling contractors that promote themselves as an *HRAI Member Company* have been pre-screened, Boncardo says, ensuring they hold the up-to-date business and trade licences, qualifications and insurance coverage that a consumer should expect of their contractor.

“We see HRAI as the first line of defence for homeowners and business owners who may not know what to ask for when it comes to trade certificates, licences and insurance. We’ve taken the first step, and also ask our members to sign a professional Code of Ethics that they will conduct business in an ethical, professional manner.”

Homeowners can use HRAI’s online locator at www.hrai.ca or by calling 877-467-HRAI to find a member contractor in their area, and access information on questions to ask when choosing a contractor.

For more than 40 years, HRAI has encouraged a high standard of professional performance. In addition to requiring trade certifications and licences, HRAI provides acclaimed technical training for its members, and works with regulators to define codes and standards in the best interest of all Canadians.

Representing approximately 1,000 professional contractors and hundreds of industry manufacturers and distributors, HRAI has built its reputation as a knowledgeable, reliable and expert source for all things related to heating and cooling.
- News Canada

Go online to find a qualified heating and cooling contractor

(196 words + 1 photo)

(NC)—When it comes to sourcing a contractor or business service, many consumers are in the habit of simply opening the latest copy of the yellow pages. There are better alternatives, however, that allow more informed selection, mainly by using the internet. The Heating Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada (HRAI), for example, lists its members online in a searchable database. The HRAI “contractor locator” is a quick and efficient tool to assist consumers who are trying to find an air conditioning, heating, ventilation or refrigeration contractor in their area. All businesses that are listed are members in good standing with HRAI, which means that they must carry relevant trade, fuel safety and municipal licences as well as workers compensation and business insurance. Members also agree to abide by an HRAI Members Code of Ethics. A company’s membership in HRAI’s Contractors Division not only tells you that the company is properly licensed, but that they are also committed to continuous improvement through education and training. For your own peace of mind, the next time you are looking for a qualified heating or cooling contractor, consider surfing to www.hrai.ca or calling HRAI’s call centre at 1-877-467-HRAI.



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