

## **Don't neglect your furnace (or it might neglect you!) (197 words)**

(NC)—Along with its effect on the colour of leaves, the autumn season in Canada brings those first cool nights that trigger the urge to switch on the old furnace or boiler, rousing it from months of dormancy. This is also the time of year homeowners should be thinking about having their home heating equipment cleaned and checked. Be sure your furnace is ready to battle the icy grip of winter by arranging a maintenance visit from your local heating contractor.

There are a number of components in your heating system that require regular inspection, including the heat exchanger, ignition system, fan, motor, bearings, belts, pumps, controls, exhaust, burners, pilot, thermostat, vent-

ing system and more. A properly licensed contractor will be able to identify problem areas and will recommend solutions that will ensure your year-round comfort. In the meantime, be sure to regularly replace the air filter on your forced air furnace and keep areas around hot air registers, return air grills or radiators free from obstructions.

For information on where to find a qualified contractor in your area, check out the website of the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada at [www.hrai.ca](http://www.hrai.ca), or call 1-877-467-HRAI.

- *News Canada*

**Find these articles at [www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com) and on the October 2009 CD**

# HOME & GARDEN

## New furnace standards – Are you ready? (346 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](http://www.hrai.ca).

- News Canada

## What to expect from a furnace inspection (298 words)

(NC)—The old adage “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it” should not apply when it comes to your household heating system. Like a car, your furnace is a running machine that needs regular tune-ups to ensure its efficiency and longevity. You wouldn’t wait more than a year to give your car an oil change, so don’t wait until your furnace breaks down to call for service.

A clean, well-adjusted heating system will save you money on fuel and will prolong furnace life. The cost of annual servicing is modest, especially when compared with the price of a new furnace.

There is some maintenance that homeowners can undertake themselves, such as the cleaning and replacing of filters. To ensure safe and efficient operation

of a heating system, however, homeowners should have their furnace inspected and cleaned annually by a qualified service technician.

Homeowners searching for a qualified heating contractor in their area can access a user-friendly website - [www.hrai.ca](http://www.hrai.ca) or toll-free at 1-877-467-HRAI.

This site lists contractor members of the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Instituted of Canada (HRAI), a national trade association.

Inspections performed by a licensed technician will include the following:

- Safety test for carbon monoxide (CO)
- Check for hazardous debris in the chimney and flue
- Clean air filters and re-install
- Check operation of thermostat and safety controls
- Check gas pilot safety system and clean as required
- Clean motor and fan
- Check blower operation
- Check condition, tension and alignment of fan belt, and perform required adjustments
- Clean burners and set for proper combustion & ignition
- Check gas piping to furnace.

Investing in the proper maintenance of a home heating system is essential to ensure that it provides reliable and efficient indoor comfort when the outdoor temperature drops.

- News Canada