

# Staying Warm

## Size Matters

Proper sizing of your furnace ensures a comfortable indoor environment at the lowest possible operating expense. There are several factors to consider when sizing a furnace including: house size, insulation values, window area, skylights, location of trees, airflow, and exposure to sun. All of these factors must be entered into a formula that is used to provide your home a properly sized furnace. Your contractor will make the proper calculations, called a heat loss.

## Efficiency

With energy costs continuously increasing it makes sense to consider an upgraded heating system including a high efficiency furnace. A typical oil furnace is 80% efficient.

When comparing new furnaces be sure to check AFUE (Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency) ratings. This rating shows the percentage of energy that's converted into heat. For example, high-efficiency gas furnaces typically deliver 90% AFUE or more. Mid-efficiency gas furnaces are usually rated at approximately 80% AFUE.

## Keeping It Quiet

When your furnace starts up do you need to turn up the television? Perhaps you have to adjust the volume on your telephone headset or ringer? Do you find yourself having to speak up to be heard? New furnaces are quieter than ever. Be sure to look for features such as insulated cabinets and two speed fan motors to keep your furnace quiet.

## Electric, Oil, Gas, Propane, Or Wood?

Unfortunately there's no simple answer to this question. Because of the wildly fluctuating nature of all energy sources you need to determine what the operating costs are in your specific area. Other factors to consider are installation issues, insurance premiums, and the availability of your preferred energy source. For example, natural gas may not be available in your area.

There are generally two reasons to consider replacing your furnace: either it's no longer working and beyond repair or you're interested in spending less on heating your home. Today's high quality furnaces have a considerable life span. For this reason it's very important to choose your new furnace wisely as you'll be living with your decision for a long time. The following tips will help you make a better buying decision.



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## The Key Factors In Furnace Selection

Your long term happiness with your furnace selection will be determined by the quality of the product and the quality of the installation as performed by your contractor. Be certain to clearly understand the terms and conditions of the manufacturer's warranty and consider purchasing an extended warranty. Always ask your contractor to provide you with references, appropriate licenses, proof of insurance, and proof of WSIB coverage in Canada or TSSA coverage in the USA.

## How Do I Buy And Maintain A Furnace?

Buying a new furnace for your home ensures your family will enjoy a comfortable indoor environment and you'll be using energy more wisely. Before you buy a new furnace be sure to talk to your heating and cooling professional. The following are a few tips to help you get the best results from your furnace purchase:

- Have your contractor make the detailed heat loss calculations to properly size your furnace
- For safety have a carbon monoxide detector installed on each floor
- Two speed or variable speed fans provide quiet and energy efficient operation
- Install a user friendly programmable thermostat on a representative inside wall
- Disposable furnace filters should be checked every month and replaced if necessary
- Washable furnace filters should be vacuumed and then washed with mild soap and water monthly
- Most washable filters will last several years before they need to be replaced
- Have your contractor check your furnace annually including your thermostat
- On high efficiency furnaces periodically check the exterior vent for obstructions or ice



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