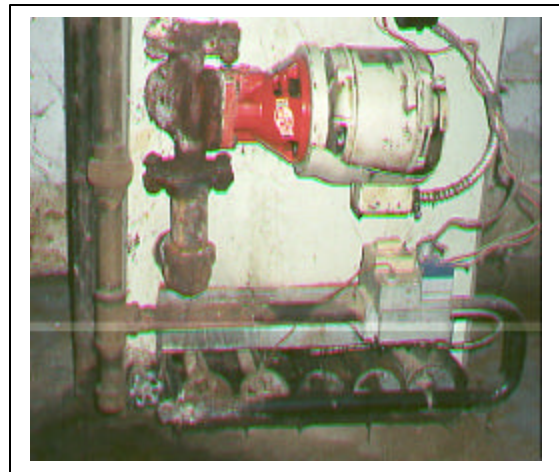


**Why should you have your furnace serviced?
Pass this tip on to your clients.**

Heating season is here. But before you turn up the heat, have your system serviced first. Pillar To Post™ inspectors have found that many people do not service their furnaces every year. In fact, from the look of these furnaces, we wonder if any have *ever* been serviced.

If you are tempted to check your heating system yourself, we suggest you resist temptation. Unless you are a heating technician, you will not likely detect problems in your system with great accuracy. This is one system that requires a licensed technician.

Here is a hot-water heating system that has not been serviced in a number of years. With this kind of system, heat gets circulated throughout the house, using water as the transfer medium. In this case, the circulating pump has been leaking for a long time. The water has been dripping onto the gas burners, which are now badly rusted. If this system had been serviced yearly, these problems would never have become so severe. The leak could have been repaired before it caused significant damage. At this stage, the cost for repair is much higher than if the leak had been caught earlier. But more important than an astronomical service bill, this system is no longer safe.



Here's why a yearly service by a qualified technician is important:

Health and Safety

Your heating system burns fuel. In a well-functioning system, the heat from the combustion process goes into your house while the combustion gasses vent outside. There are several reasons why combustion gasses may end up flowing into the house. If an animal builds its home in your chimney, for example, combustion gasses can back up into your house. Combustion gasses that leak into your house present health and safety hazards. In a worst-case scenario, carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to death.

When a technician services your heating system, he or she should verify the flow of combustion gasses. The technician will also look for leaking natural gas or oil and check for proper ignition. Once again, health and safety are the concern.

Efficiency

A well-tuned heating system is more efficient. This is good for the environment and saves you money. A quick adjustment of the fuel mixture in your heating system may make all the difference. Again, this is something only a technician can assess.

Keep It Running

A well-maintained heating system will last longer. If you service your furnace yearly, any adverse conditions will only have an opportunity to damage your furnace for, at most, one season. For instance, if you call a technician at the beginning of the winter, he or she may find a problem, such as a condensation leak, in your high efficiency furnace. The condensate from a high efficiency furnace is fairly corrosive and can damage your furnace. If the problem were left for several years, the furnace would fail before its intended life expectancy.

Inexpensive Peace Of Mind

A yearly service call by a qualified heating technician is not expensive and the job doesn't take long. If the technician does not find anything wrong, the fee will be in the order of \$60 to \$100. If the technician does find something wrong, it is better to know about it now, before the problem gets worse and costs much more.

If the prospect of an unexpected repair does not appeal to you, you can buy a basic warranty package that will cover the cost of many of these repairs. Before you buy the warranty, however, read the fine print: not all warranties are the same. Some exclude virtually everything that can go wrong, rendering them useless.

What Can You Do Yourself?

There are a few things you can do yourself. You can clean or replace the furnace filter; clean the humidifier, if you have one; bleed the hot water radiators, if you have a hot water system, just to mention a few. Do-it-yourself maintenance is important, but your heating system needs professional servicing to keep it running at peak efficiency, ensuring your health and safety.

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