



Regular maintenance along with periodic checkups by a licensed heating professional are essential for continued safe and efficient operation of your furnace. But don't wait until the first cold snap hits to make sure your furnace is ready for winter.

Here are some simple steps you can perform, plus some things you can ask your contractor to do, to make sure your natural gas furnace will keep your home warm and comfortable all winter long...

1. CLEAN OR REPLACE THE FILTER.

A clogged filter restricts the flow of heated air from your furnace, causing it to work harder and deliver less heat.

2. CHECK THE BLOWER BELT AND OIL THE BLOWER MOTOR.

Loose belts can increase furnace operating time. Replace frayed or cracked belts. Two or three drops of oil in the motor will keep it running smoothly. (Sealed blower motors require no lubrication. If you have questions, check your owner's manual or call a heating professional.)

3. MAKE SURE BLOWER DOORS ARE REPLACED PROPERLY.

This keeps combustion byproducts such as carbon monoxide separate from the warm air circulated through your home.

4. CHECK TO SEE THAT VENTS IN THE HOUSE ARE UNOBSTRUCTED.

Air in your home needs to circulate easily through the vents. Your furnace works less when heated air is not blocked and the cooler air can circulate back freely.

5. CHECK TO SEE THAT THE EXHAUST FLUE TO THE OUTSIDE IS CLEAR OF OBSTRUCTIONS AND IN GOOD CONDITION FROM THE FURNACE TO THE ROOF CAP WITH ALL CONNECTIONS SECURELY FASTENED.

You can check it by removing the flue cap near the furnace and water heater and looking through the flue to the outside. Make sure you replace the flue cap securely. If the furnace or water heater are in an enclosed room or closet, make sure they get plenty of air. These appliances need ten cubic feet of air for one cubic foot of natural gas to operate properly. Furnace rooms or closets should have door louvers or vents or a duct directly to the outside to provide sufficient combustion air.

6. REMOVE ALL FLAMMABLE OBJECTS FROM AROUND YOUR FURNACE AND WATER HEATER.

Boxes, clothes, paints, aerosols, gasoline, motorized yard tools, and any other flammable products should not be stored near the furnace or water heater.