What is the ENERGY STAR® Logo?

The ENERGY STAR® logo helps consumers recognize energy-efficient products that help save money on utility bills without compromising performance or convenience. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created the ENERGY STAR logo as the symbol for energy efficiency because of the direct link between energy consumption and air pollution problems such as acid rain, smog, and global climate change. Manufacturers voluntarily use the logo on a wide variety of products including qualifying air conditioners, heat pumps, boilers, furnaces, and programmable thermostats.

Benefits of High-Efficiency Heating and Cooling Equipment

Heating and cooling systems typically last 12 to 20 years, so the choice you make about your heating and cooling system today will affect your utility bills, home comfort, indoor air quality, and the environment for years to come. Choosing high-efficiency, ENERGY STAR-labeled heating and cooling equipment can save you 10–40 percent on heating and cooling bills, while reducing pollution associated with energy use. But, the equipment you choose is just one part of the equation. Savings and satisfaction will depend on whether your contractor correctly sizes and installs the equipment and ensures that it is working as part of an integrated heating and cooling system.

For more information about ENERGY STAR-labeled residential heating and cooling equipment, please contact:

ENERGY STAR Residential Heating
and Cooling Program
U.S. EPA (6202J)
401 M Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Or call the ENERGY STAR Hotline toll-free at 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937). On the Internet, our address is www.epa.gov/homecooling or www.epa.gov/homeheating.

Ask for Heating & Cooling Equipment with the ENERGY STAR® Logo, the Symbol for Energy Efficiency.

Consumer Tips

for Choosing a Heating and Cooling Contractor

Ask for Heating and Cooling Equipment with the ENERGY STAR® Logo — The Symbol for Energy Efficiency

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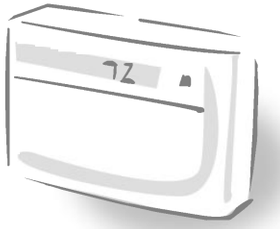
Consumer Tips

for Choosing a Heating and Cooling Contractor

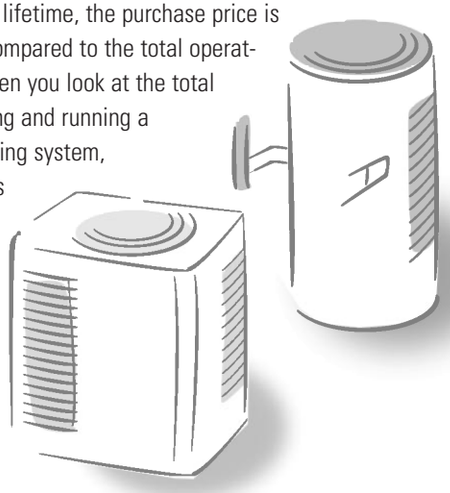


Since savings, satisfaction, and home comfort are greatly influenced by the service and advice of your contractor, EPA offers the following tips to help you make an educated decision and receive quality service:

- **Be sure your contractor is licensed, well trained, and experienced to provide quality installations.** Don't be afraid to ask your contractor about his or her training, experience, and membership in contractor associations.

- **Demand proof that your contractor is certified** to handle refrigerant in cooling systems.

- **Ask your contractor to calculate utility bill savings and total lifetime costs for ENERGY STAR®-qualifying systems using EPA software or worksheets.** Heating and cooling equipment comes with two price tags: the cost to buy the equipment and the cost to run it. Although ENERGY STAR heating and cooling systems often cost more to buy, they can cost significantly less to run because they use less energy. In fact, over the product lifetime, the purchase price is minimal when compared to the total operating costs. So when you look at the total cost of purchasing and running a heating and cooling system, ENERGY STAR units often cost less than standard efficiency units.



- **Ask your contractor to calculate equipment size (e.g., determine whether you need a two-ton or three-ton cooling system) using computer software or professional guidelines such as the Air Conditioning Contractors of America's "Manual J."** Don't use a contractor who wants to size your unit solely on the square footage of your house. To gather necessary information, the contractor should spend at least a half an hour poking around your house, taking measurements, and asking questions. He or she needs to measure ceilings, floors, windows, and walls, and check insulation throughout the home. Systems that have been properly sized to fit your home provide better humidity control, cycle on and off less frequently, and cost less than oversized systems. Insist on getting a copy of the load calculations (or computer printout). These can be useful for comparing bids.

- **Ask your contractor to inspect your ducts for leaks, incomplete connections, and compatibility with the rest of your system.** Ideally, your contractor should use diagnostic equipment and fix leaks using a quality duct sealant (duct tape is not sufficient). He or she also may recommend changes to your duct system. Since as much as 30 percent of the efficiency of your system is a result of duct work, overlooking duct improvements may compromise comfort and cost you money.

- **If your house or water heater uses combustion** (i.e., it burns something like natural gas or fuel oil), **you should have a house pressurization test performed to make certain there is no danger of "backdrafting."** Backdrafting occurs when the fumes from the combustion process are pulled back into the home, threatening the health and safety of occupants.

- **If you are replacing an air conditioner or heat pump be sure your contractor replaces both indoor and outdoor coils for maximum efficiency.**

- **Have your contractor install your system for ease of maintenance.** Make sure the inside coil can be reached for cleaning. Depending on the model, the contractor may need to install an access panel. The coil should be cleaned every year. The air filter also should be easy to remove and should be cleaned or changed whenever it is dirty. (This can be monthly during peak season.)

- If possible, **have the contractor place outside air conditioning units on the north or east side of the house, out of direct sunlight.** Leave plenty of room for free air flow on all sides and at least four feet at the top. Keep the area free of debris and shrubbery.

- **Always obtain a written contract or proposal before allowing your contractor to install a new system.** Also, be sure to ask about warranties.

- **Carefully evaluate a contractor's proposal to ensure you get the equipment and service that best meets your needs.** Remember, the contractor who gives you the lowest bid may not be the best choice for you. Paying slightly more may get you better equipment and better service.

- **Look for the ENERGY STAR logo!**