

Do You Need a New Heating System?

Your furnace or boiler keeps you warm and comfortable on cold winter nights, but it's likely the biggest energy user in your home. In fact, space heating accounts for nearly 30 percent of the average annual energy costs for U.S.



Source: www.energy.gov

households, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Upgrading to a new, energy-efficient unit can help you save energy and money, but how do you know if the time is right to replace your old system? For most furnaces or boilers, there are certain telltale signs of trouble. Consider making a change if:

- **Your heating system is too noisy.** This could be a sign of mechanical problems.
- **Some rooms in your home are too hot or too cold.** Improper equipment operation or ductwork problems could be the cause.
- **You're frequently calling the repairman.** Wear and tear on aging equipment may continue to cost you more in repair bills.
- **Your home has humidity problems.** Poor equipment operation or leaky ductwork can cause the air to be too dry.
- **Your furnace or boiler is 15 years old or more.** Upgrade to an ENERGY STAR certified [boiler](#) or [furnace](#). ENERGY STAR units must meet strict performance requirements and are up to 16 percent more efficient than standard models.

Choosing a contractor

Once you've made the decision to upgrade your heating system, how do you find the right contractor? Check with family or friends who have used a heating contractor. Look at sites, such as [Angie's List](#), that post ratings and reviews. Search [Find a Professional Contractor](#) from the Air Conditioning Contractors of America for a list of home comfort professionals in your area.

Before you commit to hiring a contractor, ask for a list of references and contact them to find out if they were satisfied with the work that was completed. Check with your [state consumer protection agency](#) or local [Better Business Bureau](#) for information about any past complaints or problems. Contact your [state licensing agency](#) to make sure the contractor is licensed appropriately.

Getting the most out of your new system

Work with your contractor to make sure you have chosen the right-size system to fit your needs. Once your new heating system is in place, these simple steps will help you save money and optimize energy efficiency:



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- Have your boiler or furnace cleaned and inspected annually by a qualified professional.
- Change the air filter once a month or according to manufacturer's guidelines. A dirty filter restricts airflow and wastes energy.
- Set your thermostat at 68°F while you are at home and lower it when you are away. Install a programmable thermostat to add convenience and increase savings.
- Make sure your walls and attic are insulated to levels [recommended](#) for your climate zone.

By combining your heating system upgrade with smart conservation strategies, you can save money and stay comfortable all winter