TECH TIP # 5



One of a series of dealer contractor technical advisories prepared by HARDI wholesalers as a customer service.

25 COMMON HEATING COMPLAINTS --- and Possible Causes

What follows is a listing of some common heating complaints expressed in the terms most often used by the owner or occupants themselves. As might be anticipated, the vast majority of owner/occupants have little knowledge of their heating system and how it works. The skilled service person can translate a layperson's explanation of what the problem is into specific technical malfunctions or adjustments.

1. "My furnace isn't giving me any heat"

- \cdot Fuses could have been blown.
- \cdot Gas line may be turned off.
- \cdot Oil tank may be empty.
- · Dirty filters.
- \cdot Blower or burner motor failed.
- · Blower belt broken.
- \cdot Control or component defective.
- · Low gas pressure.
- · Pilot outage.
- \cdot Oil burner nozzle stopped up.
- · Oil line frozen.
- \cdot Dirty thermostat contacts.

2. "Not enough heat through the whole house"

- \cdot Clogged filter(s).
- · Inadequate sized unit.
- · Insufficient input.
- · Limit switch setting too low.

- · Return air grilles obstructed.
- · Distribution system improperly sized.
- Wrong thermostat or wrong heat anticipator setting in the thermostat.
- Thermostat affected by artificial heat such as a floor lamp.

3. "It's drafty -- my feet are cold"

- · Improper distribution system design.
- · Improper blower operation.
- · Intermittent blower operation.
- · Improper blower speed.
- · Improper blower control setting.
- \cdot Furnace too large for house.
- · Input too large for house.
- Lack of insulation or air infiltration around windows.

4. "The furnace is noisy"

- · Blower noise because of bad bearing.
- Misalignment of blower pulley or motor pulley.
- Expansion and contraction of heat exchanger or duct system.
- · Solenoid gas valves.
- · Improper adjustment of burner.
- · Short, direct duct runs.

5. "Fan is squeaking"

• See # 4.

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6. "Too much variation in temperature"

- \cdot Too much thermostat differential.
- Improper heat anticipation in thermostat.
- · Improper thermostat location.
- Incorrect blower speed setting and/or control setting.
- · Unit input too large.

7. "Furnace runs all the time"

- Inquire if the house is at temperature of the thermostat setting.
- Determine if burner or blower is running.
- \cdot Summer switch may be left on.
- \cdot Continuous fan switch is on.

8. "Smell odors"

- · Leaky heat exchanger.
- · Overfiring.
- · Outdoor or cooking odors.
- · Foreign material left in duct.
- · Overheated motor.
- New paint burning off.
- \cdot Over the summer dust in first fall use of furnace.

9. "Fuel bill too high"

- · Clogged filters.
- \cdot Fuel cost increased since last year.
- · Colder winter.
- · Poor burner installation or adjustments.
- System not balanced.
- Improper insulation and/or weather stripping.

10. "Windows sweat"

- \cdot Clothes dryer not vented.
- Crawl space not covered with vapor barrier.

- Lack of storm windows or insulated glass.
- · Wet plaster.
- · Unusual amount of canning or cooking.
- Improper venting of appliances such as water heater.
- · Drying clothes in kitchen.
- · Improper venting of furnace.
- \cdot Too high of a humidistat setting.
- · Exhaust fan not working.

11. "Too much dirt"

- \cdot Too much neighborhood dirt in the atmosphere.
- · Register incorrectly installed.
- · Improper burner adjustment.
- · Lime in humidifier water.

12. "Furniture drying out"

- · Lack of humidifier.
- · Humidifier isn't working.
- Excessive infiltration.

13. "Getting shocked from rugs"

- · Lack of humidity.
- · See # 12.

14. "TV set or AM radio is being bothered"

- · Blower not grounded.
- · Electrical circuit not grounded.
- · Humidifier motor not grounded.

15. "One room to hot, another one cold"

- · Blower operating intermittently.
- \cdot Need longer blower cycles.
- System not balanced or improperly designed.
- · Register closed.
- · Damper turned off.

16. "Soot"

· Burner out of adjustment.

- · Too much infiltration.
- · Atmospheric dirt.
- · Burning soft coal in neighborhood.

· Smog.

- 17. "Blower runs all night"
- · Summer switch on.
- \cdot Fan control stuck.
- \cdot Outside temperature sufficiently low.
- · Dirty filters.

18. "Cold air coming out of registers"

- \cdot Blower control set too low.
- · Blower running too fast.
- Air at room temperature doing a heating job. (72° F air may seem cold)
- Register or vane adjustment.

19. "How do I light my pilot?"

 \cdot See instructions on panel of unit.

 \cdot See instructions in furnace literature.

20. "Pilot is on but my burner won't come on"

- \cdot Push the red button.
- · Check control circuit.
- · Check fuse or circuit breaker.
- Check thermostat to make sure it is calling for heat.
- · Power failure.

21. "Cold floors"

- Air infiltration through doors or windows.
- · Lack of vapor barrier.
- · Lack of insulation.
- · Lack of return air to unit.
- · Improper register location or selection.
- No continuous air circulation.
- · Improper system selection.
- \cdot Open crawl space or basement.
- · Uninsulated slab.
- · Garage door open.

22. "Cold basement"

 \cdot Need heat outlet and cold air return.

23. "My oil furnace exploded"

- · Delayed ignition.
- · Electrodes dirty and not properly set.
- · Electrode porcelain cracked.
- · Chimney plugged.
- \cdot Lack of combustion air.
- · Nozzle spray pattern lopsided.

24. "Furnace won't shut off; house overheating"

- · Thermostat stuck on.
- · Gas valve or relay stuck.
- · Short in electrical wiring.

25. "Basement too hot"

- · Lack of return air.
- · Leaks in duct system.
- · Filters dirty.
- \cdot Blower too small.
- · Leaks in plenum and duct system.