



Prepare Yourself for Upcoming Changes to Furnace Standards

The Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada (HRAI) and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) report that a new national minimum energy performance standard for residential gas furnaces will go into effect on December 31, 2009. This standard will apply to virtually all gas furnaces sold in Canada and will require a minimum fuel efficiency level of 90%. This level of efficiency is achieved by using well-established “condensing technology” where the products of combustion are vented through a plastic pipe, most commonly routed through a side wall.

The implementation of this standard is part of Canada’s ongoing efforts to address climate change and improve the environment. Energy efficient furnaces are also cost-effective for consumers. The installation of a condensing gas furnace (minimum 90% efficiency) will result in a fuel consumption and cost reduction of about 12% when compared to furnaces at the current standard. The dollar amount will depend on the house size and heat loss. In addition to these savings, the installation may be eligible for an ecoEnergy Retrofit grant from the federal government and complementary provincial program in some parts of the country. Additional financial assistance may be available through the Home Renovation Tax Credit that was introduced in the Federal Budget early in 2009.

The first-time installation of a high efficiency gas furnace typically requires changes to the venting system. In some cases, hot water heater venting alterations may be necessary as well. Depending on the home, the additional costs will almost always be offset by future efficiency gains and operating cost savings. There may be some situations, however, where through-wall venting can be more complex and more expensive to resolve. Examples include narrow, attached houses with front and rear obstructions, closely spaced doorways and large windows or full-width porches and/or decks.

If your house is narrow and attached to neighbouring dwellings (on both sides), and your current gas furnace is more than 15 years old, you should consider consulting with a license heating, ventilating and airconditioning (HVAC) professional who will assess your specific situation and recommend solutions of your home. A listing of qualified professionals can be found on www.hrai.ca