

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

When Choosing A Home, Ask About Heating And Cooling

(NAPSA)—Energy experts say that heating and cooling bills account for more than half of the average homeowner's annual energy costs. Therefore, when shopping for a home, it makes sense to consider the home's heating and cooling system, and its efficiency level. While the heating/cooling system is generally included in an inspection, it often receives only a cursory check to ensure that it is operating safely. Inspectors do not usually evaluate a system based on its energy efficiency and few consider factors such as the type of refrigerant.

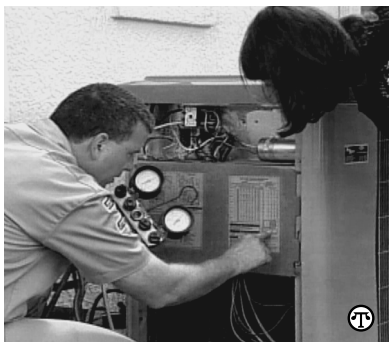
It's a good idea to ask some basic questions about the home's energy system and have the system inspected by a NATE-certified technician. The dollars invested in a thorough system checkup can save long term in lower energy bills.

Before purchasing an existing home:

- Ask to see energy bills.
- Talk to the contractor who installed or serviced the unit to find out its history or performance.
- Look at maintenance records.

When purchasing a new home:

- Ask about the system's Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER); the higher the SEER, the higher the energy efficiency.
- Consider what type of system is most efficient for the climate. For example, hybrid heating systems



Having a certified technician perform an inspection can determine if a home's heating and cooling system is operating safely and efficiently.

(those that use a heat pump in conjunction with a gas furnace) are particularly popular in areas where the temperature generally doesn't stay below freezing for long.

- Make sure the unit is R-410A compliant. As of 2010, all newly manufactured models must use this refrigerant.
- Ensure that the system will be installed by a certified technician who can properly size the unit.

Before signing on the dotted line, invest the time to make sure the home's energy system is as efficient and sustainable as possible. To find a contractor with NATE-certified technicians, go to the Consumer Contractor Connection at www.natex.org.