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## Is your heating system ready for winter?

*Air Quality News from IQAir*

Summer vacation is already a memory. Kids are back at school, and even though the days are still warm, the nights are cooling down. Soon you will start pulling out the sweaters, raking leaves and turning on the heat. By preparing your heating system now for the cold months ahead, you can lower energy bills throughout the winter and help ensure a reliable supply of warm air all winter long. Here are eight questions you can ask yourself to help you make sure your heating system is ready for the coming months:

### 1. Is your air conditioning system ready for winter?

If you have central air conditioning, consider a winter covering for the outside condensing unit of your air conditioning system. This will prevent debris or ice from falling onto the system and causing damage during the winter. You should also disconnect power to your air conditioning system for the winter months to ensure it is not accidentally turned on with the cover still on.



### 2. Have you changed HVAC filters?

HVAC system filters (whether you have central air conditioning or heating only) should be changed according to the manufacturer's instructions, typically every three months of use. Filters keep your system operating efficiently and help reduce energy costs by allowing air to flow through the system without being restricted. This is also a good time to consider adding a high-performance whole-house air filtration system such as the IQAir Perfect 16 to filter airborne contaminants year round.

### 3. Do you hear whistling noises from the windows?

You can save 20% – or even more – on energy costs during the winter just by sealing leaks around windows, doors, pipes and electrical outlets. Use weather stripping around doors and seal windows with caulking if possible. Attic hatches and areas where pipes enter the home should also be checked and sealed if necessary. Foam weatherstrip tape is a good option for this.

#### 4. Does your home have radiators?

If your home has a forced hot water or steam system, inspect the radiators. This goes for baseboard heaters as well. Make sure these areas are free of dust and dirt that can reduce a radiator's effectiveness. Also check to make sure furniture or drapes are not covering or blocking radiators, hindering airflow into the room or creating a safety hazard.



#### 5. Are the vents in your home actually working?

If air vents aren't allowing air to flow efficiently, your HVAC system will be forced to work harder than necessary, increasing energy costs. Examine vents to make sure they are open and that air can easily pass through them. With the heating or cooling system running, observe carefully to see if air is blowing freely. Consult with a licensed HVAC professional if you suspect a vent is not working correctly.

#### 6. Is your furnace a fire hazard?

Inspect the area around the furnace to ensure there are no flammable objects near the furnace (and water heater too). Paper products, aerosols and other flammable products do not belong near any source of combustion in your home. Also, if the furnace is in an enclosed room or closet, make sure air is flowing correctly through louvers or vents.



#### 7. Is your chimney or flue blocked?

The chimney and flue should be inspected for leaks and blockage every season. If possible, remove the flue cap near the furnace and look through to confirm there is no blockage. A blocked chimney can allow carbon monoxide and other gases to seep into the home. Look closely at the chimney for cracks, especially at the base.

#### 8. When do I call a professional?

In addition to reducing energy costs, cleaning and servicing of your heating system by a professional can help reduce the likelihood of needing emergency services or repairs in the coldest months. The service technician can check the furnace blower motor and belts, pilot lights, fuel pipes, test system efficiency and verify your system is operating safely.

By taking steps now to prepare your heating system for the winter, you will save money, eliminate unnecessary emergency repairs, and make your home safer to live in year round. For more information on making your home heating system safer and more efficient, visit [energy.gov](http://energy.gov).

*This online publication is brought to you by The IQAir Group, which develops innovative air quality solutions for indoor environments around the globe. IQAir is the exclusive educational partner of the American Lung Association for the air purifier industry.*

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