

How to Buy a Furnace

There are a few factors to consider when buying a new furnace. The three most important are:

1. Age of your Furnace

Age is important but not the only determining factor to replace a furnace. We have seen and tested 30 year old furnaces that run great, are clean burning and could give a few more years of safe operation. These are typically furnaces that been maintained and serviced. On the flip side, I have seen 9-year-old furnace left unattended that looked and performed terribly and needed to be replaced.

2. What is the Condition of your Furnace

Ok, don't be afraid to "open the hood" of your furnace. Take the front doors off and have a peek inside. If there is rust, you need to act fast and find out where the rust is coming from. Age will play a role in determining if your furnace is a keeper.

If it is dirty, but otherwise healthy looking call Afterglow and get a cleaning booked.

3. Amount Spent on Home Heating

For example: a home has only a furnace and gas water heater with equal billing of \$120 / month. \$20 goes to the fixed meter charge, leaving \$100. Industry average has heating at about 75% of a gas bill, meaning \$75.00 per month. Upgrading to high efficiency where you will save from 15%-25% means you may save around \$11 to \$20 per month (\$132 to \$240 per year / \$1320 to \$2400 over 10 years)

Do the math and see how much you may save!

Misconception # 1 - New furnaces don't breakdown

Unfortunately this is not true. As with any machines with moving parts, a new furnace can breakdown. What contributes to breakdowns? Lack of maintenance, the environment where the furnace is installed, duty cycles and more.

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Misconception # 2 - Mid-efficiency furnaces are more reliable than highs

Apart from the secondary heat exchanger, these furnaces are very similar. Both have electronic ignition, proving switches, safeties, venting, blowers, etc.

If you're thinking about buying a new furnace, consider:

Efficiency - 80% efficiency furnaces are no longer available. Choose something around 95%.

Fan motor, standard or high efficiency - Without question, go with the high efficiency fan, referred to as ECM or DC blower. At times there are government rebates to reward this upgrade

Warranty and Service - 5 year parts warranty is the minimum; 10 year parts is very common; consider going with 10 year parts and labour for full peace of mind. And get annual inspections / tune-ups done to ensure safe, efficient operation - it cost less than lawn maintenance.

Installation Details - The installation should not be rushed; proper start-up and commissioning is part of Afterglow's installation process.

Air Filtration - Stay away from the fibreglass filters and go with pleated, whether 1" or 4"; for families with allergies, then consider upgrading to HEPA filters.

Humidification - Homes in Canadian winters are drying than a desert; avoid steam humidifiers but go with a higher-end model humidifier to improve the winter comfort.

Should I Own or Rent?

Renting a furnace is an option. We see it more in rental investment properties. Does it pay-off? Renting is like insurance. Spending \$79 / month for a furnace that costs \$4000 means that after 50 months of rent (4 years and 2 months) the furnace is paid off. If you rent it for 10 years = \$9480. You decide!

What Next?

Call Afterglow to get more help on your decision about your water heater.