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Del's

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Del's

Fall 2019

HOME COMFORT REPORT

Understanding the Lingo

You should feel like you're in the driver's seat when it comes to the heating and air services you pay for. The processes of HVAC installation, maintenance, and repair shouldn't feel like mysteries you don't quite understand. Unfortunately, lots of consumers do end up feeling in the dark about their HVAC services because they don't understand all the lingo. Below, we interpret some of the more common terms you might be hearing from your HVAC technician.

- COMPRESSOR**
This is the part of your A/C unit that pumps refrigerant through the system. It does so under pressure, which creates the heat needed to start the A/C cycle. The compressor is a very important part of the A/C system. Often, when a compressor goes bad, the entire unit needs to be replaced.
- ENERGY STAR**
An HVAC appliance that is ENERGY STAR-compliant is significantly more energy-efficient than equipment that is not compliant. If you're looking to save money and energy, shop for an ENERGY STAR appliance the next time you need new HVAC equipment. This program is backed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- MERV**
MERV stands for "minimum efficiency reporting value." This is a figure that reflects how well a filter catches airborne particles. The higher the number, the more particles the filter can catch. A MERV of nine to 12 is often the right choice for a residence.
- SEER**
SEER stands for "Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio." This is a figure that conveys how efficient an A/C or heat pump cooling system could potentially be. You may be more comfortable if you invest in a unit with a higher SEER rating.
- CONDENSER COIL**
These coils are the part of your A/C system that converts refrigerant to a liquid. Often, if an A/C unit fails to produce cold air, there is a problem with the condenser coil.
- HEAT PUMP**
The job of a heat pump is to move heat where you need it to go. In summer, a heat pump removes heat from indoors and releases it outside. In winter, it does the opposite.
- DUCTLESS MINI-SPLIT SYSTEM**
This is an HVAC product option that gives you enhanced control over where you send your cold air. With a ductless mini-split system, you can focus your cooling energy on certain areas of your home to the exclusion of others without having to run additional ductwork throughout your home. This saves you money.
- IAQ**
IAQ stands for "Indoor Air Quality." The quality of the air you breathe is a major focus of HVAC professionals. Poor IAQ can lead to pesky allergy problems, illness, and even death in severe cases.
- VARIABLE-SPEED MOTOR**
Some A/C and heating appliances are equipped with a variable-speed motor. This type of motor self-adjusts its fan speed based on environmental conditions. Variable-speed technology offers a number of benefits, including better energy efficiency, circulation, and air quality.

We strive to make our services as user-friendly as possible. If something doesn't make sense, please ask one of our informed technicians to clarify. It's your HVAC equipment, your investment, and your comfort that matter most to us.



- INSIDE THIS ISSUE**
- SMART THERMOSTATS: THE NEXT STEP IN PROGRAMMING YOUR HOME ENVIRONMENT
- HOW TO LOWER YOUR ENERGY BILL
- DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH ATTIC INSULATION?
- HAVE A SAFE HALLOWEEN
- BUTTERMILK CORNBREAD AND SAGE STUFFING

Smart Thermostats: The Next Step in Programming Your Home Environment

In recent years, homeowners across the country have begun to discover the power of smart thermostats. By combining the programmable capabilities of their predecessors with advanced technology, these units can help you save energy and money. Let's take a look at how these devices have improved.

The Programmable Generation

For a number of years, manual thermostats ruled the cooling and heating industry. Thanks to advancements in technology, this era gave way to programmable thermostats. These new units featured digital displays, easy-to-use controls and menus, and the ability to set the on/off times for your HVAC systems. Without a doubt, these devices changed the landscape of the industry in ways that the past generation may never have considered. But, of course, all pieces of technology must stand aside for bigger and better advancements.



The Smart Generation

These new smart thermostats provide the same basic experience of their programmable predecessors, with three unique capabilities:

- **Remote Accessibility** With these more advanced units, you no longer have to be tethered to your home in order to make changes to your thermostat's settings. Instead, you can do so on the fly by accessing the unit via the Internet from any accessible device. If that's not enough, some models also include the ability to connect through a smartphone by simply downloading an application.
- **Learning Capability** If you're on a regular cooling and heating schedule, your system will learn your scheduling habits and make changes on its own, which will help you conserve energy.
- **Energy Usage Chart** Want to compare your energy usage over a given period of time so you can learn where changes need to be made? Simply check out the easy-to-read chart that you can access through the thermostat.

For more advice on the installation and use of smart thermostats, or to inquire about other ways to improve home comfort, ask the experts at Del's Heating & Air Conditioning.



HOW TO LOWER YOUR ENERGY BILL

If you're concerned about how to lower your energy bill this fall, look at each system in your home for effective ways to curb energy costs and increase home comfort in the process.

WHERE ARE MY ENERGY DOLLARS GOING?

While some systems consume more energy than others, consistency for energy-saving habits and system maintenance is the key to long-term efficiency and comfort. In the typical household, these percentages show the approximate consumption of energy.

- **Heating and air conditioning: 55%**
- **Water heating and usage: 20%**
- **Refrigeration, cooking: 8%**
- **Lighting, electronics: 12%**

HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING

Many households may find it difficult to garner energy savings from cooling and heating systems for the simple fact of maintaining home comfort. With the right energy-savings plan, the opposite is true – you'll achieve greater home comfort with lower energy bills by focusing on the following factors.

- **Seal air leaks in the home's envelope, boost insulation and seal ductwork. Consider a professional energy audit to highlight inefficient areas.**
- **Schedule annual preventive maintenance for your heating and cooling systems.**
- **Use a programmable thermostat for convenient energy savings while you are at work and during sleeping hours.**
- **Use ceiling fans throughout the year to reduce heating and cooling costs.**

WATER HEATING

Check the thermostat setting on your water heater. It should be at 120 degrees for comfortable, energy-saving temperature. Flush the tank every other month by draining about one gallon of water from the drain bib at the bottom of the tank. This helps remove sediment that would otherwise hinder heating and deteriorate the tank lining.

REFRIGERATION AND COOKING

A full refrigerator is a more efficient refrigerator. Use bottled water to occupy unused refrigerator space to minimize energy loss when the door is opened. It also provides backup water during emergencies. Try outdoor grilling during the summer to reduce heat gain inside the home.

LIGHTING AND ELECTRONICS

Connect electronics to power strips. Leave power strips "off" until needed. Use low-watt light bulbs throughout your home. They use less energy and produce less heat than standard bulbs.



Do you have enough attic insulation?

Eighty percent of all homes built in the last thirty years don't have enough insulation!

Have you ever wondered how much insulation you have in your attic? Or what R-values you have compared to what is recommended. At Roscoe Brown, we've developed this simple guide so you can see exactly what you have, and what your need might be. Just follow these three simple steps.

STEP 1

Measure the depth of your insulation using a ruler. (The insulation in your attic will vary in depth, so take an average.)

STEP 2

Pink or yellow blown in fiberglass has an R-value of 2.2. If you have a different type of insulation, go to the Internet to determine your type and R-Value.

STEP 3 - Use this formula:

Inches of insulation: _____ "
X
Type of insulation R Value: 2.2 R-Value
(Adjust if you have a different type of insulation or R-Value)
=
Total Attic Insulation _____ R-Value
(Multiply your inches times your insulation's R value)

Example: 10" Insulation depth x 2.2 R-Value = 22.0 R-Value

According to the EPA, homes in Texas should have an attic R-Value between R-38 and R-60. If your R-Value is less than 38, you probably need more insulation. But the good news is that attic insulation is very affordable, and the energy savings can quickly help make up for the expense. It's a one-time cost with savings that last a lifetime! Most experts agree that you can reduce your heating and cooling costs with the right installation by 20%, on average. Insulation is inexpensive, averaging just a little more than a thousand dollars for a typical fifteen hundred foot home.



HAVE A SAFE HALLOWEEN!

For many people, autumn events like Halloween and Harvest Day are fun times to dress up in costumes, go trick-or-treating, attend parties, and eat treats. These events are also opportunities to provide nutritious snacks, get physical activity, and focus on safety. Below are tips to help make the festivities fun and safe for trick-or-treaters.

- Swords, knives, and similar costume accessories should be short, soft, and flexible.
- Avoid trick-or-treating alone. Walk in groups or with a trusted adult.
- Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags to help drivers see you.
- Examine all treats for choking hazards and tampering before eating them.
- Limit the amount of treats your children eat.
- Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and others see you.
- Always test make-up in a small area first. Remove it before bedtime to prevent skin and eye irritation.
- Look both ways before crossing the street. Use established crosswalks wherever possible.
- Only walk on sidewalks or on the far edge of the road facing traffic to stay safe.
- Wear well-fitting masks, costumes, and shoes to avoid blocked vision, trips, and falls.
- Eat only factory-wrapped treats. Avoid eating homemade treats unless you know the cook well.
- Enter homes only if you're with a trusted adult. Otherwise, stay outside.
- Never walk near lit candles or luminaries. Be sure to wear flame-resistant costumes.

Buttermilk Cornbread and Sage Stuffing

INGREDIENTS

8 cups coarse fresh white bread crumbs, crusts removed
4 cups buttermilk corn bread, coarsely crumbled
1/4 cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
3 tablespoons fresh sage, finely chopped
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 cup unsalted butter
2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped (1 1/2 cups)
1 turkey liver, trimmed and finely chopped
1 cup celery, finely chopped
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup turkey giblet stock or chicken broth
1/2 cup heavy cream

PREPARATION

- 1 Preheat oven to 325°F.
- 2 Spread all bread crumbs in a shallow baking pan and bake until dry, about 15 minutes total. Cool crumbs in pan, then transfer to a large bowl and stir in parsley, sage, salt, and pepper.
- 3 Melt butter in a large heavy skillet over moderate heat. Add onions and liver and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, 8 to 10 minutes. Add celery and cook, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl with crumbs and toss well. Add eggs, stock, and cream and toss well.
- 4 Transfer stuffing to a buttered 2 1/2- to 3-quart shallow baking dish. Bake, covered, in middle of oven 30 minutes, then uncover and bake until browned, about 30 minutes more.

