



# JULY 2010 NEWSLETTER

## KEY FEATURES OF AN HVAC SYSTEM

While the first considerations when buying a new home are usually the plumbing fixtures, cabinets, countertops, or floor treatments, the heating and cooling system is often the feature with which most people are dissatisfied after they've lived in the home for a while.

The important features of an HVAC system are:

**Design and type of duct work.** If the ducts aren't sized and balanced properly, the home will never be comfortable. Externally insulated round ducts are the most efficient; long runs of flexible duct are the worst.

**Refrigerant.** Federal law requires R-22 to be phased out in 2015; what little that remains available for servicing after that will be very expensive, so consider using the environmentally friendly R-410A.

**Air-filter location.** Air filters should be located where they are easy to reach since the filters should be replaced about every three to four months.

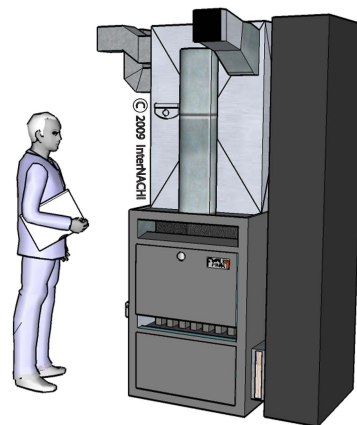
**Return-air considerations.** Remember that any air entering a room must also leave it when the doors are closed, or no conditioned air will enter the room. The ideal condition here is for each room to have an entering-air diffuser and a return-air diffuser.

**Efficiency.** As of January 2006, the minimum allowable efficiency for new air conditioners was 13-SEER. Think of it as miles per gallon: the higher the SEER, the lower the utility bill. In fact, some air conditioners (those rated close to 20-SEER) can cost half as much to run as those with the current minimum limits.

**The condenser (outside) coil type.** Coils that are made of a single metal (such as aluminum coil and aluminum fins or a copper coil and copper fins) last longer and hold their efficiency better.

**Unit locations.** Attic-mounted furnaces will eventually leak and cause ceiling damage,

unless there are special design precautions. Furnaces mounted in closets at floor level are less prone to cause leaks and water damage, and are much easier to service. The worst places to locate outdoor (condensing) units are where they can be seen and heard, where they can be easily damaged; or under the edge of an un-guttered roof.



10 Public Square  
Willoughby, OH 44094  
Bus: (440) 602-9797  
Fax: (440) 602-9933  
[www.weinspectforyou.com](http://www.weinspectforyou.com)

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## Remodeling is Rarely a Sound Monetary Investment

According to a report published by Remodeling Magazine, most remodeling projects add only 60% to 80% of their cost to the home, and no projects, on average, yield any positive return.

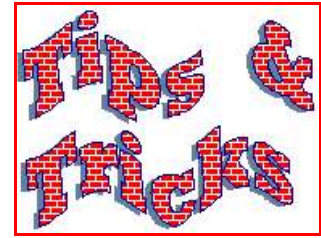
Home upgrades are thus more accurately described as consumer spending than as true investments, which ordinarily have a decent chance of seeing some kind of profit.

If you are committed to remodeling in order to add resale value to your home, avoid the following mistakes:

- ▶ upgrading your house in any way that will make it bigger or fancier than most others in your neighborhood, as such remodels are unlikely to add much value;
- ▶ adding pools or spas, as they repel as many buyers as they attract, in most markets. These upgrades often require maintenance that buyers don't want to hassle with, and they pose a drowning risk to young children.
- ▶ indulging in your personal tastes rather than aiming to please prospective buyers. Bold statements, such as brightly colored appliances, will repel many buyers.
- ▶ trusting TV shows that are based on the premise that remodeling is a true monetary investment. These shows are successful if people watch them, not if their claims are based in reality. Buying anything at retail cost and hoping to resell it at a profit – especially in the future, when the item or project has become dated – is rarely a winning financial strategy.

| Project               | % of Cost Recouped in Resale |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Deck addition         | 81.8%                        |
| Minor kitchen remodel | 79.5%                        |
| Bathroom remodel      | 70.7%                        |
| Master suite addition | 66%                          |
| Home office addition  | 54.6%                        |

Source: Remodeling Magazine, 2008



### Bye Bye Fruit Flies

To get rid of pesky fruit flies, take a small glass, fill it ½ way with Apple Cider Vinegar and 2 drops of dish washing liquid; mix well. You will find those flies drawn to the cup and gone forever!

### Consumer Complaints Against Movers Rising

Moving is a very stressful and expensive experience, and if you don't take precautions it can quickly turn into a nightmare. So how do you find a moving company that you can trust with everything that you own and feel safe in your decision?

This site tracks movers with complaints against them:  
<http://www.movingscam.com>



Have a Happy and Safe Independence Day Weekend!