



Home Heating To-Do List Addresses Winter Warmth, Safety

New survey reveals need for greater awareness of home heating system maintenance and monitoring

(October 2010) — Taking shortcuts on home heating system maintenance might be categorized as “penny-wise and pound-foolish,” according to home expert Danny Lipford, veteran home remodeler and host of the popular television show *Today’s Homeowner with Danny Lipford*. Armed with statistics from a recent homeowner survey conducted by the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC), Lipford is partnering with PERC to remind homeowners with gas-operated home heating systems of to-dos designed to keep families safe and warm this winter.

Fall is the ideal time for homeowners to have trained, qualified professionals — such as HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air conditioning) technicians or gas company representatives — perform comprehensive checkups of their home heating systems. But the PERC survey conducted in September 2010 found that just one in four homeowners has a professional inspection every year, while one in five has *never* had a home heating inspection. Those who skip such inspections cite concerns over costs and the belief that they can perform such checkups on their own — reasoning that runs counter to advice offered by Lipford and PERC.

The following is a list of recommended to-dos for homeowners this fall:

Give your home its annual checkup

An annual checkup by a home heating professional helps ensure that a homeowner’s heating system is operating efficiently and is properly maintained. Lipford recommends that owners who have not yet had such an inspection done this year consider the benefits of doing so now.

“The investment in a yearly professional inspection is worth it and could save your family money in the long run,” says Lipford. According to the PERC survey, homeowners who rely on regular inspections find that efficient heating system performance, avoidance of major repairs, and peace of mind are significant benefits.

Important maintenance steps homeowners can take on their own include regularly changing or cleaning furnace filters and checking vents to be sure they are free from obstructions.

Do it yourself — with care

Only a qualified service technician has the proper training to install, service, maintain, and repair gas appliances. **“Don’t try to modify or repair valves, regulators, or other cylinder or appliance parts. Leave this to the pros,”** says Lipford.



The Propane Education & Research Council was authorized by the U.S. Congress with the passage of Public Law 104-284, the Propane Education and Research Act (PERA), signed into law on October 11, 1996. The mission of the Propane Education & Research Council is to promote the safe, efficient use of odorized propane gas as a preferred energy source.

Have monitoring in place

Carbon monoxide, gas, and smoke detectors are critical to home safety, yet one in three homes are without one or more of these important devices, according to the PERC homeowner survey.

“Installing monitors is one item on your list that you shouldn’t put off,” says Lipford. “If you already have them installed, use this time to ensure they are working properly.”

While household gas leaks are rare, knowing precautionary measures is important. “Should you or a family member smell gas from an unknown source (both natural gas and propane have a distinct rotten egg odor), leave the house immediately — then call emergency services and the gas company,” says Lipford.

Leave space when storing

When moving items indoors for storage, don’t put anything — boxes, paint, clothing, furniture, and so on — near gas appliances. Read the instruction manual that comes with your gas appliance to find rules about clearance.

About the survey

The PERC Home Heating Survey, completed in late September 2010, included 768 homeowners in the continental United States who own natural gas and propane home heating systems. The method was designed to produce a representative sample of the U.S. adult population.

For more information on home heating system maintenance and monitoring, visit usepropane.com.

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