

10 Tips for Hiring a Heating and Cooling Contractor

- 1. Study up** – Find out about license and insurance requirements for contractors in your state. And before you call a contractor, know the model of your current system and its maintenance history. Also make note of any uncomfortable rooms. This will help potential contractors better understand your heating needs.
- 2. Ask for referrals** – Ask friends, neighbors, and co-workers for contractor referrals. You can also contact local trade organizations for names of members in your area.
- 3. Call references** – Ask contractors for customer references and call them. Ask about the contractor's installation or service performance, and if the job was completed on time and within budget.
- 4. Find special offers** – A heating and cooling system is one of the largest purchases you'll make as a homeowner. Keep your costs down by checking around for available rebates on energy-efficient ENERGY STAR qualified heating and cooling equipment. Begin your search at www.energystar.gov.
- 5. Look for ENERGY STAR** – ENERGY STAR qualified products meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and offer significant long-term energy savings. Contractors should be able to show you calculations of savings for ENERGY STAR heating and cooling equipment.
- 6. Expect a home evaluation** – The contractor should spend significant time inspecting your current system and home to assess your needs. A bigger system isn't always better; a contractor should size the heating and cooling system based on the size of your house, level of insulation, and windows. A good contractor will inspect your duct system (if applicable) for air leaks and insulation and measure airflow to make sure it meets manufacturers specifications.
- 7. Get written, itemized estimates** – When comparing contractors' proposals (bids), be sure to compare cost, energy efficiency and warranties. A lowest price may not be the best deal if it's not the most efficient because your energy costs will be higher.
- 8. Get it in ink** – Sign a written proposal with a contractor before work gets started. It'll protect you by specifying project costs, model numbers, job schedule and warranty information.
- 9. Pass it on** – Tell friends and family about ENERGY STAR. Almost one-quarter of households knowingly purchased at least one qualified product last year, and 71% of those consumers say they would recommend ENERGY STAR to a friend. Spread the word, and we can all make a big difference.
- 10. Get the ENERGY STAR Guide** – For complete information on keeping your home comfortable year-round, get the ENERGY STAR [Guide to Energy Efficient Cooling and Heating](#)  (2.6 MB) [en espanol](#) – [Guía para la Eficiencia de Energía en la Calefacción y el Aire Acondicionado](#)  (2.5MB) or 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937).