

For Maximum Comfort, Check Heating System

Before it gets any cooler system to be sure it is in working condition. Although you yourself can make a preliminary inspection of your heating system, it is a good idea to have the system professionally cleaned and serviced once a year to be sure it is functioning safely and at maximum efficiency.



CEILING DRAMATICS in this remodeled Victorian home contrast with the natural finish oak strip flooring and low pile round carpeting.

Decorating Can Be Fun In Two-Story Rooms

Would you be willing to sacrifice floor space in your home for the luxury of a dramatic, two-story living room?

A great many home builders across the country are banking that you will. Double-height ceilings are popping up in all kinds of homes, from single family houses to tiny apartments. Even the modular home comes with an extender that literally raises the roof in the family room.

Some floor space may be lost, but a high ceiling room may be less of a space waster than appears. The design usually creates an open deck or gallery that can serve as a private den or guest room.

Decorating these newly proportioned spaces can be fun, but some traditional decorating rules may have to be discarded.

First to go could be the walk-to-wall carpet, which acts as a blotter, dampening the light, airy effect of the room. Instead, why not an area rug or two marking groupings of furniture?

The exposed oak flooring will add a gleaming extra dimension to the room.

Designer Bill Bell took advantage of the extra wall space in a Norwalk, Conn., condominium to display a collection of early American harvest tools.

The effect is authentic Americana, with early American furniture and oak plank floors that create a timeless atmosphere.

A remodeled home in Cambridge, Mass., displays another approach to dealing with two story walls. The living room tucked in a corner of the newly spacious main floor is entered through a dramatic two-story circular foyer covered with super graphics.

This heady entranceway leads to a serene living room. A collection of paintings and accessories leads the eye up to the high windows which provide a dramatic punctuation mark.

High ceilings, paradoxically, place greater visual emphasis on the floor. Exposed oak floors with area rugs fit in cheerfully where carpeting would be dull.

The gleaming hardwood floors also are ideal reflective surfaces, adding sparkle and a feeling of spaciousness wherever natural light is lacking.

home & garden

The information below is a guide when checking the heating system yourself.

Electric heating systems require very little upkeep other than keeping the baseboard units free of dust that may accumulate from time to time. You should also be careful that the flow of warm air is unobstructed by

curtains, drapes or furniture.

If you have an electrified furnace or boiler, the usual maintenance of parts is called for at pre-seasonal intervals.

As with all heating systems, electrically produced heat is most efficient and economical when the house itself is properly insulated against heat loss. This is usually done during construction but can be improved by caulking and weatherstripping around windows and doors, by storm sashes and by other insulation, such as rugs and mats on concrete flooring.

In a forced warm air heating system, the filter, which cleans the air, should be checked at least twice a winter and either cleaned or replaced. Heating registers and ducts should be cleaned periodically. This is important to the maintenance of maximum heating efficiency.

The burner should be inspected and/or serviced, as well as the blowers, belts and the motor. Turn off the electricity while you work on the furnace so that it cannot start while you are working.

If you have a forced hot water heating system, the boiler and circulator pump

should be checked. Make sure the thermostat accurately registers the house temperature. The oil or gas burner should be serviced.

You should also ascertain that the pipes, heating coils, radiators or baseboard units fill properly with water. If any of the units fill with air, the heat will be drastically reduced.

Air valves should be clean in steam heat systems. They can be cleaned with a non-toxic solvent or rust remover or replaced for very little money. Clogged air valves will result in slower heating.

Fireplaces need quite a bit of maintenance for safe and enjoyable use. The flue and chimney should be periodically checked for cracks or leaks. Both the flue and chimney should be light. Otherwise, gases or smoke can escape into the house.

Clean soot from the chimney to avoid further fire hazard.

Keep a door or window open when lighting a fire in the fireplace. Store firewood out of doors. Check sparks from flying out of the grate with a fireproof screen.

Never close draft before all embers are out and cold. To be entirely safe, it is a good idea to keep an approved home fire extinguisher handy for putting out small fires or for containing any larger outbreaks until help arrives.

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