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## The Comfort Zone Newsletter - Summer 2015

July 2015

### Greetings!

The Baltimore area has had a difficult winter, topped off by a rainy and chilly spring, followed by some hot issues that have made their mark on the area. Cool down with HGH Mechanical's Comfort Zone for all the latest HVAC news. This month, we provide some guidance for alternative heating and cooling sources such as geothermal systems and ductless systems. We also take a look at safety precautions you should monitor so that our technicians don't have an accident in your home from lack of safety training.

Sit back and enjoy this issue of Comfort Zone.

Best regards,

Manny Gomez

## What's Hot...

### Geothermal Heat Pumps Hot Commodities This Year

Geothermal heat pumps are gaining acceptance and increasing in sales volume due to their energy efficiency and common sense installation. Geothermal heat pumps use the constant temperature of the earth rather than the fluctuating outside air temperature. According to the Department of Energy website, these heat pumps reach a 300-600 percent efficiency on the coldest winter nights, compared to a 175-250 percent by air source heat pumps on a cold day.

How does it work? Unlike the changing climate above the earth's surface, there's a constant ground temperature a few feet below the earth's surface. It is warmer than the air above it in the winter and cooler than that air in the summer. The Geothermal Heat Pump exchanges temperatures with the earth to keep your home warm in the colder months, and cooler in the summer months. The installation cost of a geothermal heat pump is much greater than that of a regular HVAC unit, but the future savings in both energy and costs is well worth the expense now. You can recoup your costs in energy savings within five to ten years of installation. A geothermal heat pump system is estimated to have a 25-year lifespan for the inside components and 50 years for the ground loop, so there's a pretty good chance you won't have to replace it any time soon.

When purchasing a geothermal heat pump system, there are four types of ground loop systems available. Closed loop systems include horizontal, vertical and pond/lake, and an open loop system. All four of these can be used for both residential and commercial building but they also depend on climate, soil conditions and available land. Check with your HVAC professional to learn more about the system that would be right for you.

## Chill Out

### Ductless Systems

If you have a room or home section without air conditioning, your choices for cooling it are more than just a fan or a room air conditioner. Explore the benefits of a ductless system. These systems are ideal for homes with “non-ducted” heating systems, baseboard heating, radiant panels and space heaters. The systems enhance air circulation and provide customized comfort based on individual preferences. For example, some units have electronically controlled louvers and fan speeds, precise temperature settings for each room or zone, and a cool setting that quickly lowers the temperature in warm rooms.

Ductless systems can be money-savers, also. First, installation is easy and requires little to no ductwork. The space-saving units can be mounted on any wall and only require a small 2 ¾-inch hole drilled in the wall. The long refrigerant pipes allow for extra installation and design flexibility. You’ll see reduced costs on your monthly energy bill. Because there is less ductwork, there are fewer duct leaks, so less energy is lost during the heating and cooling process. In addition, utility companies and local, state and federal government may offer tax credits or rebates for consumers who purchase the systems. Ask your HVAC professional for information on both the systems and the savings.

### Safety Tips for Home HVAC

Naturally, if you’re having work done in your home, you’d expect the workers to make safety the number one priority. The servicer should have insurance, be careful in your home and respect your time and property. In case of any accidents on your property, the servicer’s insurance coverage should include liability and workers’ compensation. Monitor these safety tips when a servicer visits your home:

- Are the technicians professional and experienced on the job? Have they been on the job for several months, or are they still in training? If they are in training, an experienced technician should accompany them. Statistics show that most accidents on the job happen during the worker’s first year.
- Does the company have a safety program in place for its employees to remind them of safety procedures and update them on safety hazards? Those companies that do have programs in place will have better safety records because safety is top-of-mind.
- Is the technician dressed appropriately in a uniform that will not interfere with his work? Does it identify him as an employee of the company and does he have an I.D. badge and cell phone with him?
- Do the technicians respect your time? Do they move quickly to finish the tasks at hand, or do they lollygag? Too much attention paid to things outside the HVAC area is a red flag for you to escort the technician out of your home.
- Do they wear safety goggles when necessary, gloves as necessary?

- Do they tell you exactly what they are going to be doing in your home? Do they turn off electrical systems if necessary?

If you feel there is a safety issue when a technician is working in your home, trust your instincts and bring it to the technician's attention, or call the central office with your concerns. True HVAC professionals strive for safety and have no tolerance for carelessness.

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