

Time to change your furnace filter

A new filter will improve comfort, generate savings, and ensure your furnace fan has a longer life

As the warm weather gradually recedes, Ontarians are preparing for the inevitable snow and cold temperatures. Green\$aver, Toronto's leader in environmental energy efficiency and home energy audits would like to remind homeowners that household winter preparation should also include replacing the furnace filter.

A simple check can provide valuable benefits

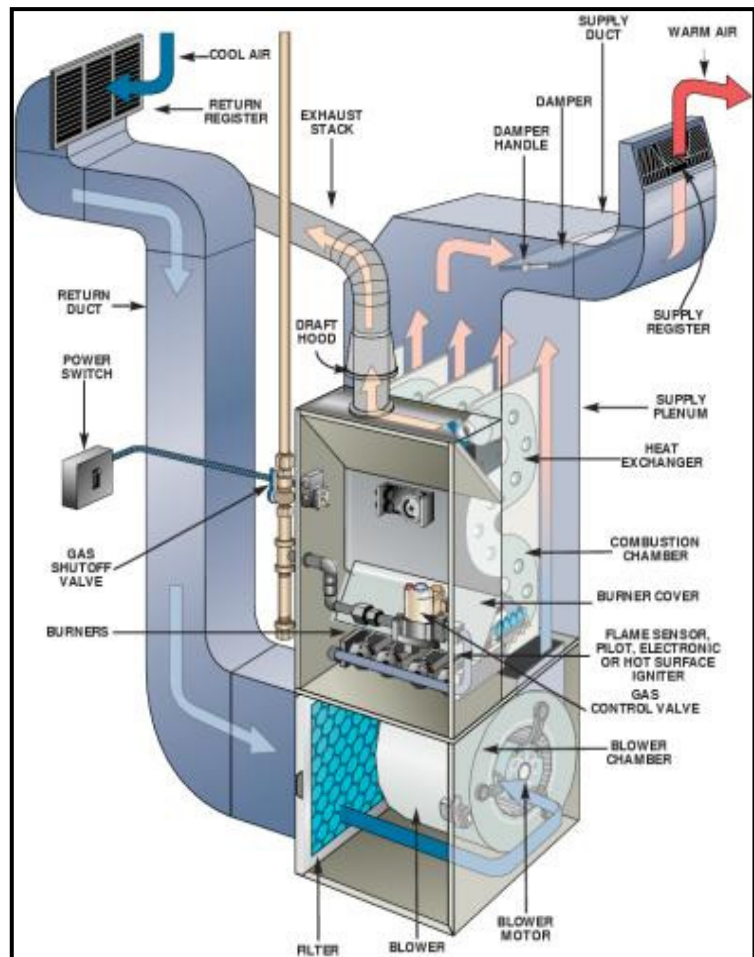
Each winter, homes across the country depend upon some form of home heating, including a forced air furnace. In 2005, 52% of Canadian homes use forced air furnaces as their principle heating and cooling system. These operate throughout the year, moving cool air through the house in the summer and warm air in the winter. This constant operation means homeowners should check their furnace filter at least every six months (or more often in dusty conditions) to make sure the filter is clean. If your filter is dirty, consider replacing it with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter - they will catch 99.97% of air particles.

Installing and checking your furnace filter

If the floor or area near the furnace is covered in dust, vacuum or sweep prior to replacing the filter. Next, locate the service panel, usually on the furnace's lower front or side. Once you've turned off the furnace, gently pop open or pull down the panel door with your hands; tools usually aren't needed. Look for a framed-mesh rectangular screen inserted either horizontally or vertically near the intake-outtake blower. Carefully slide the filter screen out and look for brown, dusty buildup on the mesh screen. This is an indication of a clogged or dirty filter.

If you have a reusable plastic-frame or metal-frame filter, use a hose to rinse away the dust particles on the screen in the backyard or sink. Let it dry and reinstall.

If you have a disposable cardboard-frame filter, write down the size and then dispose of the dirty filter. Buy a new furnace filter of the same size (available at hardware and home supply stores). Continued... 1/2



Finally, take a look for the “MERV” rating on the filter; the higher the MERV rating, the better the filtration. Make sure that your furnace technician approves a change to a high efficiency filter. Some of the filters with higher MERV ratings will reduce the amount of air passing through the furnace and affect its performance.

GreenSaver encourages homeowners who are considering replacing their current furnace with a newer, energy efficient model, to check out the ecoENERGY retrofit rebates offered by the federal and provincial governments.

For more tips on how to make your home more energy efficient, or to schedule an ecoENERGY Retrofit assessment, visit www.greensaver.org or call (416) 203-3106.

GreenSaver is an independent non-profit corporation dedicated to environmental energy efficiency. They have pioneered Ontario residential energy conservation for 25 years and have an unparalleled history of performing both economically viable and environmentally friendly measures to help individuals and organizations with their energy needs (www.greensaver.org).