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ANNUAL FALL FURNACE CHECKUP

As everyone will be cranking up our furnaces soon, wouldn't it be a good idea to have it checked before you really have to rely on it working properly? When talking with our clients, a huge majority have never had any sort of service done on their furnace. They just hope that it will turn on when they need it.

This is the time to schedule a furnace specialist to come to your home to check out its operation. They can check that everything is working properly, clean out the furnace and fan, change the filter, change humidifier elements and do any sort of lubrication necessary for the fan. They can also look for any signs of possible malfunctions that may lead to either the furnace not working or a carbon monoxide event in your home.

During the early fall, many furnace companies are not very busy being between air conditioning and heating seasons. There are other benefits of having them come out now. This includes:

- You will not only can get them scheduled for your convenience as they are not that busy now, you will also have more time to budget and comparison shop for the lowest price.
- Furnace companies may still have some of last year's models available.
- By replacing a very old furnace, you will not only save money on using a high efficiency furnace, but you may also be able to get rebates and federal tax credits through the rest of the year.
- And if the outside temperature is above 70°, they may even be able to check your central air conditioner.

DRYER VENT CLEANING

We get the same blank look from our clients when we ask them if they have ever serviced the back of a dryer and the dryer vent line. It is as if it is out of sight, it must be safe. But there are over 17,000 fires annually as a result of using a dryer.

The cause of a lot of these fires is lint, whether at the back of the dryer or in the vent pipe. Over time, the dryer vents can get partially clogged due to the lint sticking to the sides of the vent pipe. This limits the ability of the dryer to get rid of the hot and moist air. This only causes the vent pipe to accumulate even more lint.

Another item that can be a safety risk is the use of plastic hoses that go between the dryer and the vent line. Not only can these set fire, they can also allow air from the dryer to come into the home. This is especially problematic if you are using a gas-fired dryer where carbon monoxide can be directed into the home.

If you are handy, you can purchase dryer vent brushes from home improvement stores to clean not only the vent line but also at the lint filter area. You should also vacuum the back of the dryer. If you do not feel comfortable doing this, you may be able to have your service person do this work for you when they are servicing your furnace. Also an appliance repair person can do this sort of work.

OCTOBER'S SEGMENT

I will be covering safety topics related to smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, as this is usually the time when people change the batteries of these units. I will also be talking about making hot water heaters safer for young and old people. Again, the goal of these Home Safety Physicals is to do things in your home to make it safer for you and your family on a proactive basis and help minimize your risks.