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”What to Ask a Contractor”

Most people take for granted the comfort provided by their central air conditioner, heat pump or furnace until something goes wrong and the unit needs to be serviced or replaced. When this happens it's important to contact a quality heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) contractor who is knowledgeable, skilled and qualified to do the job.

The HVACR industry is highly technical and can be intimidating to those that know nothing about how the equipment works in their home. It's important that consumers are educated about the product they are buying or having serviced. The first step is to understand what is required of the contractor by the local jurisdiction. To insure satisfaction the following questions should be asked of a prospective HVACR contractor.

Are you licensed?

The State of Ohio requires that all HVACR contractor be licensed. Written estimates and contracts should have the license number of the contractor on them.

Are your technicians CFC certified?

Any technician working with refrigerant needs to have a certification mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency showing that he or she is trained and certified in the proper techniques for recovering, recycling, reclaiming and disposing of used refrigerant.

Do you carry the proper business and workman's compensation insurance required to do the work?

If they are licensed in Maryland they should already satisfy this question.

Are you going to give me your quote in writing?

This should outline what the contractor's, as well as the consumer's, responsibilities are.

Do you perform warranty service throughout the warranty period?

Some contractors only install – they don't service the equipment.

Don't consider price only.

Be sure that you are comparing “apples to apples” when considering more than one contractor. Be sure they are quoting you on the same size unit and offering the same service.

Will you provide references?

Find out if other customers are satisfied.

And, finally, ask if the contractor is a member of the Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA).