



Your Heating System: Is it installed correctly & operating properly?



Recently, we were hired to inspect a 30-plus year-old town house for a client (original owner selling). The forced-air furnace was also original. When it was time to be checked over, it was fired-up and the output to floor registers in all rooms was determined to be fairly even. However, the problem was the 'return' side which was checked and found to not be working at all. (Note: For those not familiar, an air return consists of a grille and duct system which carries cooled air back to the furnace, then the air is filtered and re-heated to be sent out again.)

This was considered to be a serious problem; even though the seller felt it was not at all important (She said "It's the same as always..."). However we could clearly observe that the heating system was struggling to find proper air to supply for re-distribution.



When the crawl space was checked-out, the "ah-ha" moment arrived; we discovered that at least one of the return air grilles did not have any ductwork connected to the furnace! The home had been built with a deficient heating system and the owner just ended up getting "used to it" (or had no idea).

Is your heating system installed correctly & operating properly?

If you're not sure what to look for, consider a Safety Inspection by a Professional Home Inspector.

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The client shared her plans to upgrade/replace the old furnace for both energy efficiency and peace-of-mind, but the issue was not going to be fixed without correcting all the return-air ductwork as well. This job would be very challenging and difficult due to the low-height of the crawl space, where the ductwork would now have to be installed. Therefore, this would be a VERY expensive job due to high labour costs.

Presently facing this enormous bill, this client would have greatly benefitted from a thorough professional inspection at the time she had originally purchased this property. Any qualified inspector would have advised her about the missing sections of her heating system. Possibly she would have re-considered buying a home with such shoddy workmanship or at least she could have negotiated with the building contractor to have the repairs completed before she moved in, thereby saving herself from this hefty bill 30 years later.

