

Constant Comfort

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news

SPRING 2001

Calling NSF/MBO Can Get You Into A Lot Of Hot Water

Some time ago, we received a call from a customer to tell us that his 80-gallon electric water heater was leaking and needed to be replaced.

"Are you getting enough hot water?" we asked. "When all of my children are home we frequently run out of hot water," he said.

"We can replace your existing electric water heater with an 80-gallon or even a 120-gallon electric water heater or we can install an oil-fired water heater. They produce six times as much hot water for about a quarter of the price," we said.

"How can that be?" he replied. "Because the average electric water heater makes 20 gallons of hot water an hour," we explained. "We call that recovery rate. It tells you the amount of hot water that a water heater can make in one hour. The average oil-fired hot water heater has a recovery rate of 120 gallons an hour, which means that it makes six times as much hot water."

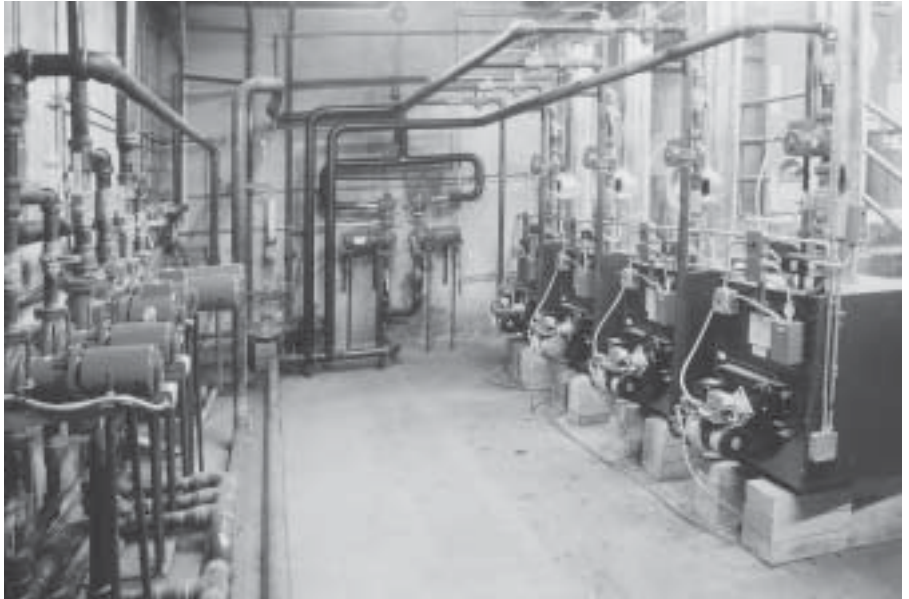
"What about the operating costs?" he asked. "Generally," we said, "an oil-fired system can make all the hot water you need for about \$20 month. On the other hand, running an 80-gallon electric water heater costs about \$65 a month."

**North Shore Fuel
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The new boiler system at Temple Shalom in Medford.

Projects We've Done

Last spring, we were asked by Temple Shalom in Medford to work out a boiler room plan that eliminated a 50-year-old system and replaced it with a more modern one. We replaced a very large boiler and a smaller one with four small ones and installed backup pumps on all the building's zones. We expect it will be many years before this system requires any significant work and that problems will be few and far between.

"If what you say is true," he asked, "then why doesn't everyone have an oil-fired water heater?" "Because oil-fired water heaters cost about three times as much to install," we told him.

"But if you save \$45 a month and get six times as much hot water," he said, "it seems like a good investment, doesn't it?"

"You don't have to convince us," we answered.

We gave the customer a price on a 32-gallon oil-fired water heater and told him we could install it the next day. He asked, "How can I possibly get enough hot water from a 32-gallon oil-fired water heater when I wasn't getting enough from an 80-gallon electric water heater?"

"Remember what we told you about recovery rate," we said. "Believe me, that 32-gallon water heater will make enough hot water for you to sell to your neighbors if you want. Try it for two weeks," we suggested, "and if you don't get enough hot water, well put in a larger one at no charge."

"That sounds fair enough," he said. We installed the 32-gallon oil fired water heater the next day. Two weeks later we received a phone call from the customer. "Just as you said, this oil-fired water heater is amazing," he said. "I can't believe how much hot water it makes. I can't run out of hot water no matter how hard I try."

If you have a hot water or hydronic

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Al Schacht

Employee Profile

Al Schacht

Sometimes we ask our customers to identify the technician who worked in their home. If they answer that it was a big man, we figure that it was Al, who is the largest man on our team. His size comes in handy when we have to move a heavy piece of equipment, but his touch is still soft on the equipment he services. Al's background as both a technician and a mason helps us when we have to go through concrete or brick to do our work.

Al lives in the Boston area with his wife, Kelly, and his son, Eric, 5. In his spare time, Al enjoys working on cars and fishing.

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Attitude

We are often asked what the difference is between us and the gas company or an installing plumber or the low price oil sellers. Well, the biggest difference is attitude. We want to have a long term relationship with you, our customers.

Thus, we try very hard to take care of all your heating, cooling and hot water needs. We won't shut off your fuel supply (the gas company will do this) or shut the system down when it's 20° outside unless we have exhausted all reasonable options. Before determining that a customer's system cannot be fixed, the service manager must be called. We won't cut corners on installations causing problems later. (Even after you buy it, it's still ours!)

We won't sell you oil at a price that would force us to run unreliable or unsafe equipment or employ incompetent people. We will try to cover our and your costs on the futures market to ensure you a fair price. We will use local suppliers who go the extra mile for us so that we can go the extra mile for you.

All of our people have the attitude that we all work as a TEAM.

Our technicians (heating, not just oil) help each other out, and they are especially careful with your annual tune-ups, since a poorly done one might come back to bite one of the team members in the middle of the night one day. This also applies to our office staff, who are sometimes called at night to help solve problems.

This attitude helps us keep up to date on all the best ways to keep your equipment running well with the fewest possible problems. Our goal is no emergency calls at all. We will never achieve this, but we'd be a lot worse off if we didn't try for it.

Hot Water *continued from page 1*

system, you can get the same dramatic results as this customer by having us install a storage tank (called an "indirect water heater") off your existing boiler. This indirect water heater stores hot water just like a giant thermos bottle. It has a stainless steel coil inside. We run boiler water through the coil to heat the hot water. The two waters never touch each other and everything stays very clean.

**"A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;
an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty."**

—Winston Churchill
(1874-1965)