

Constant Comfort

A Tradition of Service Since 1912



news

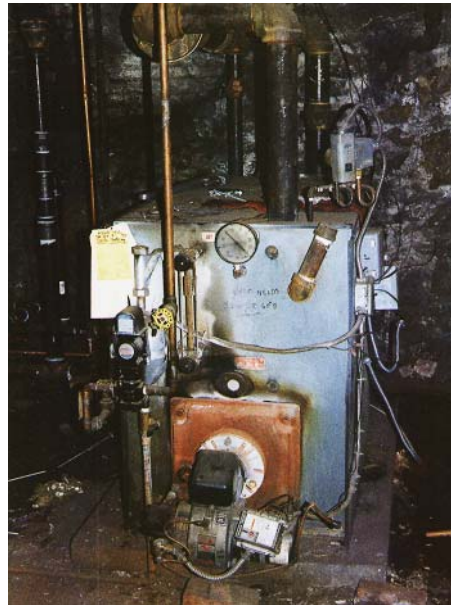
SUMMER 2004

The Good Old Days

Sometimes we hear from one of our customers about the “good old days.” Well, often they exist more in our memories than in reality. However, family life was stronger in those days and there seemed to be more of a personal touch in much of our life. We can still remember when the telephone was answered by an operator, who asked, “What number please?” We guess that shows we belong to an ancient generation.

Well, we doubt any of us would like to return to the days before the polio vaccine, radio instead of remote controlled color TV, cars whose cooling required wide open windows instead of air conditioning, or many other conveniences of modern life.

In the case of heating equipment, the level of progress has also been dramatic. Nowadays we have highly efficient, quiet equipment that provides plenty of heat and hot water at a reasonable fuel cost. Remember, only the rich can afford poor heating, but they're usually too aware to stand for it. If a better system is of interest to you, please give us a call.



Before...



...and after.

Out With The Old — In With The New...

Last fall, we were asked to price a job removing an old boiler and installing a new one in an apartment house. Here are the before and after photos. By the way, the building now burns less oil and the comfort level is higher because we also repaired the control system.

When It Comes To Service, We Are Proud To Be “Independent”

As you might imagine, our service department is a very busy place, especially in the cold days of winter. We have three or four people fielding calls and dispatching our six licensed service technicians in a timely manner. However, some of these calls come from consumers who purchase their fuel from other oil companies. They call us because they're unable to get any satisfaction from their oil supplier.

We always find it surprising that these “non-customers” become quite upset when we inform them that we do not service accounts that don't buy oil from us. They can't understand what they refer to as our “independence.”

We're not being independent, however; we're simply being fair. People decide to do business with us because they understand and appreciate the services we provide them. Twenty-four-hour-a-day service requires a good deal of time and expense. Office help, an answering service, stand-by technicians, trucks and parts inventories are just a few of the costs.

When people do business with us, they recognize that they may pay a little bit more for oil, but the service will be there when it's needed. By agreeing to service these non-customers, we would be doing a great disservice to our loyal customers. One, we would be subsidizing our competition, and two, we would be using men and materials earmarked for our customers.

So, when one of your friends who doesn't buy from us tells you they called for service and we wouldn't help them out, simply smile and say, “That's my oil company.”

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What You Need To Burn Any Fuel

We sometimes are called to a home where there is a complaint about dirt. The most recent one was traced to the burning of aromatic candles, which created soot. We demonstrated this by burning the candle about a foot below a clear glass pane, which got visibly dirty in about an hour.

Sometimes, the burner (oil or gas can be the culprit; if you burn anything without enough air to provide oxygen) will produce soot, which is actually a material called carbon black, used in tires and ink, the result of burning natural gas in very little air.

Older burners had to be adjusted with lots of excess air to cleanly burn the fuel. This reduced efficiency and thus used more fuel. New modern burners operate with far less air and are more efficient.

However, sometimes the building, itself, is the problem. Newer homes are being built far more tightly than older ones and require someplace for air to enter the home and get to the burner. Often times, in older homes a burner is fully enclosed with tight-fitting walls, limiting the air going to the burner. Or perhaps a family takes a winter vacation, leaving behind a tightly fit home where the doors are not opened for days.

Any of these situations can cause the burner to starve for oxygen, and with oil,

cause dirt. With natural gas, it can create dangerous carbon monoxide. Older homes, where basements are large and walls are often porous, rarely see this problem. The situation can also occur if you have a whole house fan, a range that exhausts air outside (Jenn-Air), central vacuum system, or even bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans.

If you have a tightly enclosed burner, please give us a call. The usual solution is to provide a direct outside air connection to the burner, which usually also quiets burner noise. By the way, this problem usually shows up only in the coldest weather, when all the windows and doors are tightly shut and the burner runs the most.

Knowing The Job

A couple of years ago, we bid on the replacement of a large number of zone valves in an apartment house that we had been servicing for some time. We knew the situation with the valve replacement and figured that we'd have to spend more time than usual on the job to do it right—and our price reflected this additional time. Well, we were underbid by about 20% and didn't get the job.

A couple of weeks later, we learned that during the valve replacement, which involved using a torch in tight quarters, a fire had started in the building. The fire department had to be called and two apartments suffered serious damage. The tenants had to be placed in a motel for a month (at the owner's expense) while the apartments were repaired.

Several months ago, a man was relating to us the big problems he was having with a contractor doing a kitchen renovation. We asked how he chose the contractor and his response was, "Price."

Many years ago, we needed a special part made and asked three people to quote a price for us. One of the quotes came in far higher than the other two. When questioned why, the supplier said that he had tried to make a similar part a couple of years earlier and had encountered major problems. *He knew the job!* We chose to use him because the most important thing to us was getting the job done right.

So, when you have a job to be done, make your decision based upon who you think will do the job right, and you'll usually be much happier in the end.

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