Smart Energy Living®
Solutions
Fact Sheet

Smart Energy Living Alliance®
Building a better energy future

Before Cleaning

After Cleaning

Duct Cleaning

Most people are now aware that indoor air pollution is an issue of growing concern and increased visibility. If not properly installed, maintained, and operated, heating & cooling components become contaminated with particles of dust, pollen or other debris. Some of these contaminants may cause allergic reactions or other symptoms in people if they are exposed to them.

There is a continuous cycle of airflow within your home. The key to the continued and efficient operation of your heating and cooling system is periodic maintenance. Periodic maintenance, cleaning, and servicing will keep your system operating at its peak energy efficiency and safe operation and could create a healthier indoor environment.

Duct cleaning generally refers to the cleaning of various heating and cooling system components of forced air systems, including the supply and return air ducts and registers, grilles and diffusers, heat exchangers heating and cooling coils, condensate drain pans (drip pans), fan motor and fan housing, and the air handling unit housing.

In addition to having a potentially cleaner home and air, duct cleaning by professionals can also alert you to any potential problems there may be with your ductwork, such as disconnected or failing ducts. This can greatly impact the energy efficiency of your home.

Methods of duct cleaning vary, although industry associations have established standards. Typically, a service provider will use specialized tools to dislodge dirt and other debris in ducts, and then vacuum them out with a high-powered vacuum cleaner.

Duct Cleaning

Duct Cleaning – Continued

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency does not certify or endorse duct cleaning contractors but they do provide a suggested checklist in selecting a contractor:

- Do not hire duct cleaners who make sweeping claims about the health benefits of duct cleaning -- such claims are unsubstantiated.
- Do not allow the use of chemical biocides or chemical treatments unless you fully understand the pros and the cons.
- Check references to be sure other customers were satisfied and did not experience any problems with their heating and cooling system after cleaning.
- Contact your local Better Business Bureau to determine if complaints have been lodged against any of the companies you are considering.
- Interview potential service providers to ensure:
  - they are experienced in duct cleaning and have worked on systems like yours;
  - they will use procedures to protect you, your pets, and your home from contamination; and
  - they comply with National Air Duct Cleaners Association's air duct cleaning standards and, if your ducts are constructed of fiber glass duct board or insulated internally with fiber glass duct liner, check with the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association's (NAIMA) recommendations.
- If the service provider charges by the hour, request an estimate of the number of hours or days the job will take, and find out whether there will be interruptions in the work.
- Make sure the duct cleaner you choose will provide a written agreement outlining the total cost and scope of the job before work begins.

Go to www.SmartEnergyLiving.org for More Information About Energy Efficiency

Smart Energy Living Alliance® is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping consumers, like you, make smart energy decisions and ensuring qualified professionals are available to meet consumer needs. We provide unbiased information, tools and resources, including connecting you to local energy businesses.

The managing partners of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) created us in 1999. We publish an award-winning magazine, Smart Energy Living, in partnership with NREL.

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