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## Winter Is Coming: Hire a Licensed Contractor To Check Your Heater

**AUSTIN** – When the first cold fronts of the year finally roar down from the north, many Texas consumers will turn on their heating systems for the season. Regular maintenance of your system will extend its life and discover any mechanical issues before they become expensive health and safety issues.

The first step in hiring an air conditioning and heating contractor should be checking the TDLR website ([www.tdlr.texas.gov](http://www.tdlr.texas.gov)) to make sure that they are licensed by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

“Hiring a licensed contractor helps ensure the safety of your family and property. Checking whether your technician is licensed is an important step in protecting yourself from shoddy and dangerous work,” said TDLR Executive Director Brian Francis.

Performing early, regular maintenance can also help keep your system from breaking down on the coldest day of the year – an expensive and cold reminder that upkeep is important.

Once you’ve confirmed that the contractor is licensed through TDLR, here are several things they should be inspecting in your heating system:

- 1) Air Handler & Furnace (Natural Gas, Propane)
  - Check gas connection for leaks. Improperly operating gas connections are a fire hazard and is a health concern.
  - Check gas pressure and proper burner combustion. Improper gas pressure and/or a dirty burner will cause equipment to operate less efficiently.
  - Check heat exchanger for cracks and flue connection. A cracked heat exchanger or improper flue connection can leak deadly carbon monoxide into the living spaces.
  
- 2) All Systems
  - Check incoming power and tighten connections as necessary.
  - Check thermostat and system controls for proper operation and sequence.
  - Check air handling unit for proper air flow.

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3) Heat Pump & Electric Heat

- Check heat pump heating cycle – reversing valve operation.
- Check “emergency heat” operation; energized if heat pump fails or is in defrost cycle.
- Check electric heat strips for proper operation when system is energized.

4) General

- Listen for abnormal noise and search for source of unusual odors.
- Clean and inspect blower assembly.
- Older units: lubricate motor and replace fan belt if applicable.

About TDLR

*TDLR provides oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Currently, the agency manages 39 business and occupational licensing programs with more than 800,000 licenses across the state.*

Visit TDLR’s [website](#) for more information and resources. You can search the [TDLR licensee database](#), and also find [past violations](#) in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR’s Customer Service line is available anytime between 7 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese.

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