



Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation  
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## Winter Is Coming: Hire a Licensed Contractor To Check Your Heating System

**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. It is a good idea to have the heating system checked thoroughly for proper operation and potential safety issues. If your heater operates with natural gas or propane your service professional will check for carbon monoxide leaks that can migrate into the living spaces.

A natural gas or propane heating system that is operating correctly vents carbon monoxide and burned gasses to the outside, where they safely dissipate. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, tasteless and odorless gas that can be deadly in high concentrations.

Combination smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are inexpensive and should be placed outside all sleeping areas in a residence heated with natural gas or propane. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include a dull headache, weakness, and dizziness. Higher concentrations will induce nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath, confusion, blurred vision, and loss of consciousness.

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.

“Checking whether your contractor is licensed, and the technician servicing your equipment is registered with TDLR, is an important step in protecting yourself from shoddy and dangerous work,” said William Weatherly, TDLR Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Program Chief. “Licensed contractors and registered technicians have undergone a criminal background check and have had the required training. The licensed contractors have passed a comprehensive exam and complete yearly continuing education classes.”

Performing annual fall 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.

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TDLR Customer Service | (512) 463-6599 | Toll-Free (in Texas) | (800) 803-9202 | Relay Texas-TDD: (800) 735-2989

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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.
- 3) Heat Pump & Electric Heat Systems
  - 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.
  - Replace filters and educate customer on efficient operation

#### About TDLR

*TDLR provides regulatory 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 regulates 39 business and occupational licensing programs with more than 1,000,000 licensees 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

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*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 and Vietnamese.*

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