



Home comfort news  
for the customers of  
Atlas Air ClimateCare  
and Atlas Robinson

# An Engineer's Opinion

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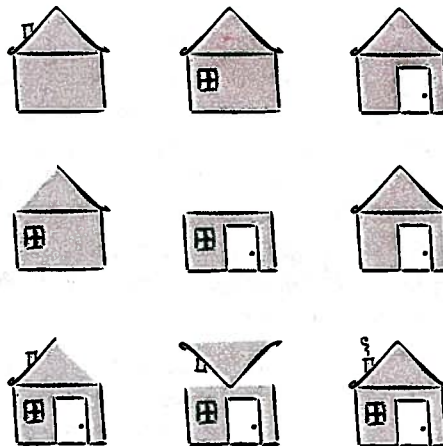
## Editorial

By Roger Grochmal, P. Eng.,  
President

## Perfect Comfort

**A** year has passed since I purchased my new home, though it wasn't until June that my builder finally called to say it was complete. After many months of great anticipation, I finally moved in with all of the excitement of a new parent, only to find that "complete" is a relative term. Of course the roof was attached and all of the major structural components were more or less in place, but there were lots of little things that weren't—and still aren't—quite right. My builder would argue that there just wasn't time to get it all exactly right. But as my father used to say, "If you don't have time to do it right the first time, when do you have time to do it right the second time?"

How to consistently get things done right—the first time—is something we have spent a lot of time on here at Atlas. That's why we decided to become ISO 9001:2000 registered. ISO—the International Standards Organization—is a universally accepted system of quality assurance. The criteria for becoming ISO registered vary, depending on the type of industry that you're in. Since we're a service-based company, our ISO framework contains a customer-satisfaction component. To become ISO registered, we had to establish staff training programs, develop a way to measure results, and survey our customers.



Now we ask for feedback on all of our installations, and we randomly sample service calls and maintenance visits.

What does all of this mean for you? It means that, as the only ISO 9001:2000 registered residential HVAC contractor in Canada, we are able to provide you with the closest thing to perfectly consistent service and comfort that is possible in this industry.

Speaking of comfort, if there is one thing we've learned over the years, it is that comfort is all about balance. As the weather turns cold, we'll begin shutting up windows and doors against the cold. But in the process of shutting out the cold, we keep in stale, polluted indoor air. True comfort during the cold months is a balancing act between conserving heat and ventilating poor indoor air. This issue of *An Engineer's Opinion* is all about keeping warm without sacrificing fresh

air. We'll tell you how to save energy when you heat your home and how to keep indoor air fresh and clean. And for the ultimate fresh air experience with heat, we've added patio heaters to our line of products, which you can read about in this issue. We think you'll enjoy this issue, and as always, if you have any questions, please call.

*Roger Grochmal*



### About An Engineer's Opinion

*An Engineer's Opinion* is published to assist homeowners in creating the healthiest, most comfortable environment in their homes at the most reasonable cost. If you have questions, criticism, or input, we want to hear them. Please call me personally at (905) 279-3440 or e-mail me at [rgrochmal@atlasair.ca](mailto:rgrochmal@atlasair.ca).

# Save Money and Get Comfortable with the EnerGuide For Houses Program



In August, 2003, the federal government launched its EnerGuide For Houses grant program. Under this program, homeowners can receive grant money for making energy-saving home improvements such as upgrading an aging heating system. Some of the information about the EnerGuide for Houses program has been confusing—particularly when it comes to heating-system upgrades. Here's what you need to know about how the EnerGuide program works.

The first step in the EnerGuide for Houses program is to apply to have an energy audit performed on your house (called the "A" evaluation). This audit determines how energy-efficient your home is to start off with. After the audit, you'll receive recommendations on

how to improve the efficiency of your home. Once you've made the improvements, you have a second audit performed (the "B" evaluation). This audit determines how much energy your improvements have actually saved. The more you've saved through your improvements, the more grant money you are eligible to receive.

To find out more about the EnerGuide for Houses Program, you can go to the Natural Resources Canada website at [www.energuideforhouses.ca](http://www.energuideforhouses.ca). If you are looking for an evaluator to perform your evaluations, please call us. Not all evaluators are the same, and we can provide a reference for an evaluator who will work with your schedule.

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Atlas will pay the cost of the EnerGuide evaluation for homeowners who purchase a qualifying Energy Star rated high-efficiency furnace before December 15, 2004.

## Why a Furnace Tune-up Pays

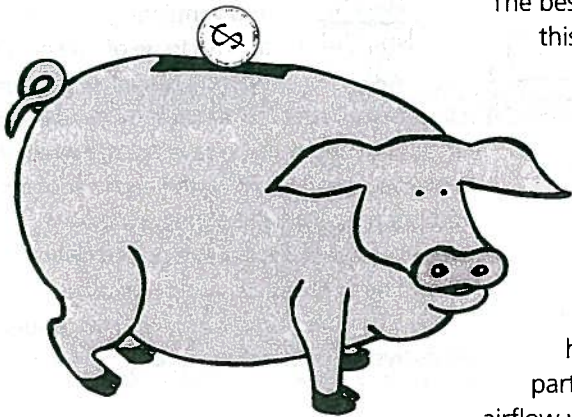
With the rising cost of energy in the last couple of years, many people feel they have to make a choice between paying more to stay warm in the winter and living with a constant chill. But you really don't have to make a choice: there are things you can do to stay warm and comfortable all winter long and still keep your heating bills under control.

The best way to save money this winter is to make sure that your heating equipment operates as energy efficiently as possible. To do this, simply have your furnace cleaned and serviced during the heating season. Dirty parts and restricted airflow will really decrease the efficiency of your heating system and

you'll have more trouble getting and keeping your home warm. As an added bonus to having your furnace tuned up, your service technician will be able to spot any problem that could lead to the build-up of carbon monoxide, a deadly poisonous gas.

If your heating system is more than 10 years old, you should consider replacing it with a new, more efficient system. You will save even more energy and money this winter if you

- Make sure that warm air and return air vents are free from obstructions (such as furniture);
- Use a programmable thermostat to set the temperature back by a few degrees at night and when you're away from the house;
- Have your ducts inspected and sealed if necessary, especially if they run through unconditioned spaces such as an attic or crawl space.



## Breathe Easy and Stay Warm this Winter

**W**hen I first moved into my new house, I expected some chemical off-gassing from the various paints and other compounds that make a new house smell new. However, I was not prepared for the headaches I would experience every time I was in the house for more than ten minutes. Since my home is fairly tight, the chemicals would not be able to dissipate easily through an open window. And with winter coming, reducing the chemical build-up through natural ventilation would be next to impossible.

Many of our customers live in homes that are as tight as mine is, either because they've been tightened up through energy-saving renovations, or because they were built that way to start with. As a result, it's easier for us to keep the heat in, but we also end up keeping in a lot of air-borne contaminants as well.

Excess moisture from cooking and showers, pet dander, off-gassing from cleaning products, and germs are just a few indoor pollutants that build up in our homes throughout the winter without proper ventilation.

To keep your air clean and healthy all winter long, you really need a good whole-house ventilator in combination with an air cleaner. There are two kinds of whole-house ventilators:

heat-recovery ventilators (HRVs) and energy-recovery ventilators (ERVs). Both HRVs and ERVs work by exchanging the air inside your home with fresh outdoor air. The air is exchanged a few times per hour, but before the heated air is exhausted outside, about 70% of the heat is recovered so that you're not wasting all of it. Fresh incoming air is filtered first before it is distributed throughout the house, which is something to consider if you currently rely on natural ventilation through gaps, cracks, or open windows. The difference between an HRV and an ERV is that an ERV can block humidity—a useful feature in the summer when you're trying to keep indoor air cool and dry. In my house, I have an ERV. I have a HEPA filter to trap particles as small as bacteria, and a Swordfish ultraviolet light air purifier to eliminate odours. I also added a medium-efficient pleated media filter, because the HEPA filter won't protect my furnace or air conditioner from dust.

This winter, my house will be a haven against the cold, with clean, fresh air to keep me comfortable and healthy. If you have any questions about how we can help you stay comfortable all winter long in your home, please call.

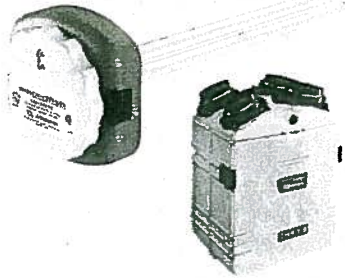
## Get Cozy with a Gas Fireplace

**M**any people go to a lot of time and trouble to finish their basement, only to find that it is seldom used because it is still too cold and uninviting. A gas fireplace is the perfect solution because it can add a beautiful focal point to a finished room while providing plenty of heat. Since gas fireplaces operate with just the flick of a switch, you can have a warm room in seconds without the wait and mess of a traditional wood-burning fireplace or stove.

As a space heater, a fireplace does an excellent job. If installed in a living or family room where you tend to spend most of your time, it will keep you warm and comfortable and you can

lower the temperature by a few degrees in the rest of the house. Gas fireplaces can be vented very easily in just about any room, so you have a lot of flexibility when it comes to choosing where to put one.

If you are thinking of purchasing a fireplace this fall, or you have an older fireplace that should be replaced, please call us. We are pleased to offer a wide range of styles to choose from. In particular, we recommend the units available from Vermont Castings. These fireplaces have very high quality brass and cast finishes, and some come with remote control devices that make them very easy to use. They even have limited lifetime warranties on the major components.



**An ERV, Swordfish ultraviolet light air purifier, and a HEPA filter can go a long way towards making your indoor air clean and fresh all winter long.**

**If you do have a gas fireplace, it is important to remember that it could be serviced and checked every year to ensure that it operates safely and efficiently.**

## Atlas Notes **Enjoy Your Patio this Winter**

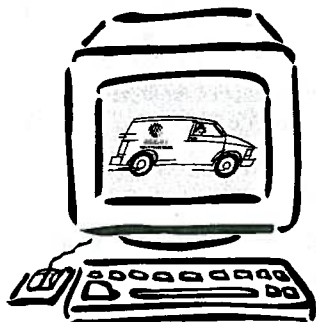


If you've invested in a beautiful patio, then you know how depressing it is to be forced inside each fall by the cold. Fortunately, thanks to top of the line patio heaters from Schwank, you can enjoy your patio parties right up until the snow flies.

You can choose from portable or permanently mounted models. Portable heaters allow you the flexibility of changing the layout of your patio, and you don't have to have gas piped in.

Permanently mounted models eliminate the hassle of changing and handling fuel tanks. All of Schwank's models allow you to adjust the heat intensity to suit temperature conditions and avoid energy waste. They are the most efficient heaters on the market, have the best warranties, are CSA approved, and have durable design and construction to ensure long life and an attractive appearance. Call us today to choose a patio heater model that is right for you.

## Check Out Our New Website!



Atlas has changed a lot in the last few years we've grown by leaps and bounds, and so has our list of products and services on offer. To reflect all the changes, we decided to update our website and give it a facelift. You'll find our brand new website at our old web address:

[www.atlasair.ca](http://www.atlasair.ca). You'll see a lot of the same great information that was on our old site, along with a complete list of our products and services. But the best part about the new website is our own unique "Amazing Atlas Whole-House Climate Makeover." This section

of the website contains a video clip that tells you all about the Atlas Customized Indoor Climate System. In the video, we walk you through all of the important elements of a perfect indoor environment. At Atlas, we understand that good indoor air quality is very important to our customers, so in particular, we tell you all about how to achieve virtually pure indoor air. We think you'll find our newly redesigned website to be interesting and useful. If you have any questions about what you find at [www.atlasair.ca](http://www.atlasair.ca), please contact us.

## Here's to Healthy Indoors

This year I joined the board of the Healthy Indoors Partnership, a collaboration of government, industry, and other organizations whose focus is on the real health effects of poor indoor air quality in homes and buildings. Through my position on the board, I'll be able to report back to you on the latest research,

new equipment, and control strategies available on indoor air quality. I'll also be able to report our customers' real-life experience with poor indoor air quality, to help the Healthy Indoors Partnership make sound decisions for your benefit.



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