# Your Home's Heating System

## A Basic Understanding Of The Heating System To Solve Simple Problems, Avoid Preventable Maintenance, And Tips to Save On Home Heating Costs

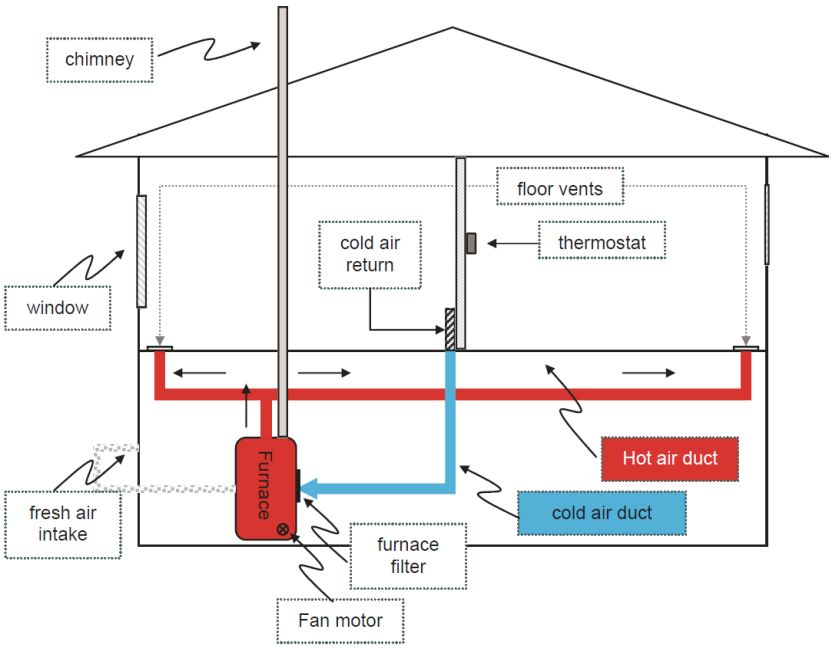
### Heating System

Having a basic understanding of the heating system is useful in solving simple problems, avoiding preventable maintenance, and limiting damage in emergency situations.

The heating system in a typical home has the following basic elements:

1. ***Heat source*:** typically consisting of either a furnace, boiler heat, or a series of electric heaters. Most conventional furnaces burn natural gas, propane, oil, or wood and use a blower fan at the base of the furnace to force hot air through the home. Electric heaters typically consist of baseboard or space heaters that may also have installed fans. Electric heaters are controlled either by a wall thermostat or a switch at the heater.
2. ***Warm and cold air ducts*:** consist of rectangular sheet metal boxes and/or circular tubes joined together to carry warm air from the furnace to vents located throughout the home and to bring cold air back to the furnace. Duct work is normally situated between or below floor joists.
3. ***A temperature control*:** a thermostat located on the wall in a central location of the home that allows the tenant to regulate the temperature of the home.
4. ***Chimney and fresh air intake vent*:** present in homes equipped with a furnace.

Look at the following example of a forced-air heating system in a home. Heat vents are normally located underneath windows. The cold air return vent is located on an interior wall. The thermostat is normally placed near the centre of the home to monitor the temperature.



### Tips to save $$$

***Something to think about…***

- During cold months try to maintain a comfortable thermostat setting, except when you should turn the thermostat down.
- Locate and control hot air vents. Close vents where heat is not needed (e.g., in storage areas).
- Change the furnace filter every 1 - 3 months during furnace use.
- Periodically clean dust build-up in vents, returns, and in the fan motor compartment. **Note**: flip furnace emergency switch off first (red switch and cover plate).

Contact your local housing authority for more information

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