

Questions to ask your HVAC contractor



Make sure you get the best solution for your home.

Will you do an assessment of the insulation and weatherization of my home to make sure it is adequate?

If they don't look in the attic and assess the insulation of your home, don't hire them

Will you do a load calculation to determine the size system I need?

Ask to see it, and if they can't show you a print-out of the calculation, they probably did not do one. If they did not do a load calculation you should not work with that contractor because they will not know how to properly size your equipment.

Are the ducts in my home operating effectively in all the rooms?

Make sure they inspect the ducts and ask them what they found. If they do not inspect the ducts, do not work with that contractor.

Where is the best place to locate the external compressor unit?

You typically do not want the unit outside of bedrooms or living areas if possible. External units come in different configurations and some are narrower so they can be used in smaller spaces or between buildings

How noisy is the external compressor unit?

Ask to see the loudness specs and compare them to other equipment to make sure you get a unit that is not too loud if that is a concern for you.

What is the efficiency of the system?

To compare systems, you will need to know the SEER rating for cooling and HSPF ratings for heating. The higher the numbers the more efficient the equipment is – that translates to better heating and cooling and lower operating costs.

What is the coldest temperature that the heat pump will operate?

A high efficiency heat pump will operate down to 15 degrees and as low as minus 13 degrees. If it only operates effectively to 30 degrees or higher, that means you will need back up heating for those cold days. This can be avoided with more efficient equipment that is readily available.

Will this system need backup heating (resistance or gas) for cold weather days?

There is no need for backup heating if the system is a high efficiency system. If they push for gas back up, find another contractor. Electric resistance backup is not bad if it only comes on occasionally, but newer high efficiency systems will not need that and will have lower operating costs but may cost more up front.

Will this equipment qualify for IRA tax incentives?

Equipment in the Northern part of the US and Canada it must have a SEER rating of 15.2 or greater and HSPF rating of 8.1 or greater. Ask your contractor about this and if they are unsure, find another contractor.

Will you help to find all the incentives available?

Ask them what incentives you qualify for before they do any work. A good contractor will be knowledgeable about all the incentives available to you.

Do you offer low interest financing?

Many installers offer low interest or even zero interest financing through the manufacturer of the equipment. This can save you money by avoiding up-front costs and interest charges. Be aware that some zero interest loans will come with penalties for late payment – you can set up automatic payments to avoid those charges.

If they present multiple options – how do the annual operating costs and up-front costs compare?

A higher efficiency system will cost more up front but should cost significantly less to operate.

Is there a way to install a Heat Pump without upgrading my panel?

Many homes can be electrified with a 100Amp panel, but you will need an electrician who knows how to do that. If they say you need to upgrade your panel, ask them if they are familiar with the Watt Diet or other approaches to electrify homes without a costly panel upgrade.

I am thinking about adding a (EV Charger, Induction Range, HP Water Heater) – could I save some money by doing more electrical work all at once?

The fewer times you have an electrician or any contractor come to your home the lower the cost.