

Q&A: Locating a Good Technician

Q: How do I find a good contractor/technician?

A: Ask friends and neighbors who they have used to repair their heating and air conditioning units. If they have used a contractor who employs certified technicians and received good service then that contractor might be right for you. Look in the phone book for the NATE certified seal.

Q: Is the contractor's technician NATE-certified? How do I know?

A: North American Technician Excellence (NATE) is a non-profit certification organization which works to raise the standard of excellence in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning industry nationwide. Through testing, NATE ensures technicians have the knowledge they need to excel in today's industry. NATE's Consumer-Contractor Connection web site allows consumers to locate contractors serving their area by telephone area code (for the widest possible selection) and by postal ZIP code. Ask contractors you find on the NATE site to send a NATE certified technician, as sometimes the contractor may have both NATE-certified and uncertified technicians working for them.

Ask to see the technician's credentials. NATE-certified technicians carry a card which is proof that they have taken and passed the necessary tests. Many NATE-certified technicians wear the NATE patches on their shirts.

Q: What are the benefits of using a NATE-certified technician?

A: NATE-certified technicians have demonstrated their knowledge of today's increasingly sophisticated heating and cooling systems by passing a nationally recognized test developed and supported by all segments of the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning industry. Consumers can rest assured that with a NATE-certified technician, they are getting the best installation and service for maximum comfort and economy in their heating and cooling system. Better installation and service mean a longer life for your heating and cooling equipment and increased energy efficiency. Technicians who are NATE-certified know that NATE stands for excellence and quality service. To find out more about NATE you can visit the NATE Web site at www.natex.org or contact NATE at 1-877-420-NATE.

Q: Does the contractor/technician have a license?

A: You need to ask your contractor if a license is required from the city or state, and how the license was earned. Did the contractor and technician have to pass a comprehensive test, or just pay a fee to receive a piece of paper?

Q: Is the contractor/technician familiar with my brand of heating and cooling unit?

A: When contacting a heating, ventilation, air conditioning/refrigeration (HVAC/R) contractor, be sure to identify your system by name. HVAC/R contractors and technicians are familiar with most current heating and cooling units.

Q: Does the technician or the contractor have liability insurance to cover damage in my home?

A: Ask the contractor. A technician or their employer should carry adequate insurance that would cover any damage done to your home by accidents while they are servicing your heating and cooling unit.

For more information: Contact North American Technician Excellence (NATE) a not-for-profit organization that works to raise the standard of excellence in the heating, ventilation, air conditioning/refrigeration (HVAC/R) industry through technician testing. A NATE-certified technician is an individual who has demonstrated knowledge and technical skill in the installation and servicing of HVAC/R equipment.