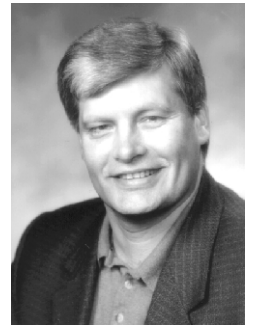




Home comfort news  
for the customers of  
Atlas Air ClimateCare  
and Atlas Robinson

# An Engineer's Opinion

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## Editorial

By Roger Grochmal, P. Eng.,  
President

## How I Sold My House

I've just sold my old house, so now I can relax and enjoy the anticipation of moving into my new home in a few weeks. Selling your home can be nerve-wracking, but my experience was painless. In fact, not only did my old house sell quickly, I had three offers above asking price. My secret? I followed the advice of my real estate agent and spruced up the outside of my house a little, to improve its curb appeal. I found this helped bring people in the door to take a look. But it was the up-to-date heating, air conditioning, plumbing, and electrical systems that really sold the house. These are the systems in a home that make living comfortable and safe. Though it may be invisible, comfort sells.

After many years as both a contractor and a home owner, I've found that comfort is more than just enjoying cool air on a hot summer's day. For many people, including me, comfort means not having to worry that I will have to face a big repair bill in the near future or that I will have to replace an entire heating system that has broken down prematurely on the coldest night of the year. And since most people eventually move on to a new house, comfort means knowing that you'll get top dollar when it is time to sell your home.

At Atlas, we understand how your heating, air conditioning, and air quality systems have everything to do with the comfort and value of your home. Your home comfort equipment may be the best on the market, but if it is not treated to superior service, it will cost you a lot more to operate, break down more frequently, and you'll be a lot less comfortable. That is why our entire business is focused on providing you with excellent service that is easy to get, any time you need it. When you call our office, you get the immediate attention of one of our customer service representatives—real people who know all about the work that is being done in your home. If you want to speak to any of the management staff, including me, all you have to do is ask.

This issue of *An Engineer's Opinion* is all about increasing the value of your home and staying comfortable while you're living in it. Among other things, we'll tell you about saving energy and money with high-efficiency air conditioning, how to reduce your risk of an insurance claim

due to flooding, and how to take stock of the important systems in your house. And, as always, if you have any questions about what you read here, 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).

# The New Generation of Air Conditioners Deliver Comfort and Energy Savings

If your air conditioning system is more than 10 years old, then you are probably paying a lot more than you need to get and keep your home comfortably cool. Air conditioning technology has changed quite a bit in the last few years. Many of the air conditioners manufactured today are more efficient, less harmful to the environment, and even come in designer colours. To help you sort through what you need to know about the new generation of air conditioners, we've developed the following guide. If you have any questions that aren't addressed in this guide, please call us.

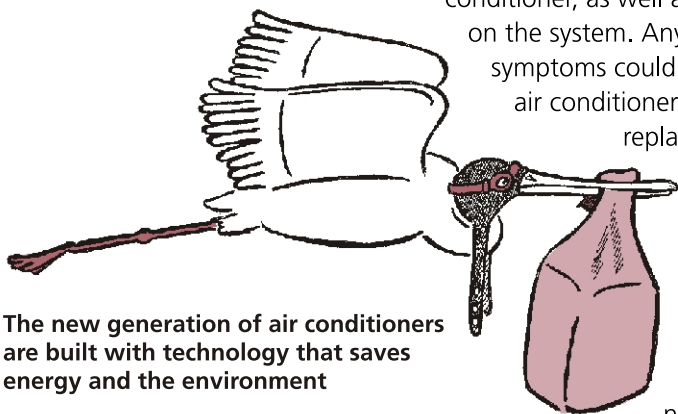
## Is it Time to Replace Your Air Conditioner?

The classic signs of an aging air conditioner include a decrease in comfort (your house becomes increasingly difficult to get and keep cool), and an increase in the cost of operating the air conditioner. You may also notice strange noises coming from the air

conditioner, as well as ice building up on the system. Any of these symptoms could indicate that your air conditioner is ready to be replaced. Of course,

any of these symptoms could also indicate that service or a repair is necessary, so it is always best to call us if you

notice any of these problems.



The new generation of air conditioners are built with technology that saves energy and the environment

## How to Choose an Efficient Air Conditioner

Every air conditioner is assigned a SEER number when it is manufactured. SEER stands for seasonal energy efficiency ratio, and it tells you how efficient an air conditioner is. The higher the SEER, the more electricity you save. An older air conditioner may have a SEER as low as 6, whereas any air conditioner manufactured in the last couple of years has a SEER of at least 10. As of 2006, any new air conditioner will have to have a minimum SEER of 13. To save the most energy and money

when you operate your air conditioner, you can opt for a very high-efficiency air conditioner with a SEER between 16 and 18.

## Keeping Your House Cool: Refrigerant Choices

A few years ago, the refrigerants used in automobile air conditioners, refrigerators, and freezers were phased out because of their harmful effects on the earth's ozone layer. R-22, the refrigerant used in virtually every residential air conditioner, is due to be phased out by 2010. R410a is the refrigerant that is replacing R-22, and it will be much less harmful to the ozone layer. Unfortunately, R410a won't work in an air conditioner that uses R-22. To use the new, environmentally friendly R410a, you must purchase an air conditioner that has been built to use it. Virtually all of the new, high-efficiency air conditioners manufactured today use R410a as the refrigerant, so if you go with a high-efficiency air conditioner, you not only save energy and money, but you will also help preserve the ozone layer.

## Making Your House Look Cool: Colour Choices

York, a leading air conditioner manufacturer, has recognized that when we're out in our yards, we want to enjoy the view. That's why they've come up with a series of designer colours for their outdoor air conditioning units, including champagne, terra cotta, gun metal, jet black, stone, and Bermuda green to blend in with the garden.



Upgrade from a basic York Affinity CZB Model Air Conditioner to a Colour Model for FREE! (This is a \$300 value, and is in addition to the manufacturer's \$350 rebate.) Offer expires June 30, 2004

## Protect Your Investment: Keep Your House Dry

**T**he single best way to keep your home in good shape and maintain its value is to keep it dry. Water can seriously damage building materials by causing them to rot and warp. Worse, wet materials can foster the growth of mold, which can trigger allergies and asthma. In our line of work, we come across many homeowners who have had to make insurance claims as a result of significant water damage. The following are some things you can do to reduce your risk of an insurance claim for water damage.

- Prevent ice dams on the roof. Ice dams form when heat escapes from the attic and melts the snow closest to the shingles. The water freezes at the eaves trough and backs up under the shingles and into the attic, causing damage and

possibly, mold growth. To prevent ice dams, ensure that your attic is properly insulated. If you add any appliances to your ceilings, such as fans or pot lights, make sure that they don't penetrate the vapour barrier, which would allow heat to escape into the attic.

- The kitchen and bathrooms should have exhaust fans to remove moisture from cooking or showers. The exhaust fans should be vented outside.
- Every fall, turn off the water supply leading to outdoor taps and leave the taps open so that they don't freeze or split. If you have a chronic problem with frozen pipes, you can have freeze-proof faucets installed.
- When you are away for vacation in the summer, do not operate your air conditioner. Set your thermostat to OFF so that the air conditioner will not come on while you are away.

## How to Choose An Air Conditioner when You Think You Might Move

**I**f you're thinking of moving in the next 5 years or so but you would like to replace your air conditioner, then you may wonder what the best choice would be. You won't want to invest in the most expensive air conditioner available if you're going to move in a few years. On the other hand, if you have to buy a new air conditioner right now, then you'll still need a unit that will be fairly efficient and keep you comfortable. If you are going to stay where you are for a while, then we recommend a high-efficiency system containing R410a. If you will move in the next couple of years, then you may consider replacing your current system with a moderately efficient air conditioner that uses R-22. Remember, the best air conditioner has to be installed and serviced correctly, or it

won't operate efficiently, it could cause problems in your home, and you may be faced with early and unnecessary repair bills. At Atlas, we stand firmly behind all of our work, so you may be sure that if you choose us for your installation and service, you will keep utility bills in check and stay comfortable all summer long.

### What the Pros Look For

These days, most people hire a home inspector before they purchase a new home. If you are thinking of selling your home, you might consider hiring a house inspector to inspect your home before it goes on the market. That way, you'll be able to take care of any problems ahead of time and prevent a nasty surprise when your buyer conducts their inspection. A good house inspector will tell you that the five most important areas of your home include a solid roof, quality windows with good seals, a sound electrical system, a solid foundation with no evidence of water leaks, and a well-looked after, complete heating - air conditioning -and air quality system.

# Can You Afford Not to Pay for Good Service?

**We would like you to know that although our service prices may not be the highest you will find, the quality of our work is.**

**F**rom time to time, a customer will ask us what goes into the cost of a service call. At Atlas, we understand that you would rather spend your hard-earned money on something that is a little bit more exciting than having your air conditioner or furnace serviced every year. However, when you don't have your home comfort equipment serviced—or worse, when you do and the job is done poorly—your furnace and air conditioner won't run as efficiently and will cost more to operate. You'll also find that your equipment will require more repairs, and won't last as long as it should.

There are reasons why good service may cost a little more. Well-stocked trucks with correct

parts, quality tools, state-of-the-art technology, good management, organized dispatching, and professionally educated, trained, and experienced technicians are all essential to providing you with superior, hassle-free service.

Though good service does cost a little more, our service prices are generally equal to or less expensive than those of our competitors. However, though our prices may not be the highest you'll find, the quality of our work is. At Atlas, we stand behind everything we do, because providing superior, hassle-free service is what we're all about.

# Enjoy Improved Comfort and Efficiency with Products from York and Carrier

**M**any of you ask us for information on the latest home comfort products. **Carrier** has come out with their **Infinity** series of products, including its highest efficiency air conditioner with a SEER of 16. This air conditioner uses R410a as its refrigerant, with a compressor that offers improved comfort and humidity control. The Infinity thermostat works with other Infinity products and can replace all of the other mechanical controls in your home. It is available with a large screen for easy reading

and programming, as well as the ability to monitor and adjust your home's humidity level, even when your comfort system isn't heating or cooling. This thermostat can save you up to 20% on your heating and cooling costs over a conventional, non-programmable thermostat.

The new **Affinity** series of air conditioners from **York** not only offer higher-efficiency units with R410a, but they are also extremely quiet to operate and are available in designer colours to blend in with your yard.



**ATLAS AIR  
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