

**Headline: Maintaining Your Boiler and Furnace System**

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With more than thirty years of experience servicing the residential HVAC industry, we at Canada Furnace have been asked countless questions about virtually every aspect of "in home comfort" that can or could be thought of.

Below is an FAQ list of the most common questions we are often asked.

**Q:** How often should the strata corporation have its furnace or boiler system serviced?

**CF:** *In BC, utility companies and contractors generally recommend once annually. New furnaces should be OK on a 24 month cycle, but more frequent service is very important as the appliance gets older.*

**Q:** How long does a furnace or boiler last?

**CF:** *On average 20 to 25 years is common. Like all mechanical devices however, there are exceptions at both ends of the scale. A unit that is well serviced and perhaps only utilized a small portion of the year will undoubtedly outlast a similar one that has been "worked hard" with minimal maintenance.*

**Q:** How often should a furnace filter be replaced?

**CF:** *During the operational season (which may be year round if you have an integrated air conditioning system or heat pump) every 2 to 3 months.*

**Q:** What is Poly B piping and how does it affect the boiler in my home.

**CF:** *Poly B was/is a grey plastic pipe product used in the past for in floor heat distribution which due to its chemical composition allows air via osmosis to collect in the entire heating system. It should be noted that Poly B piping has been removed from the market and is no longer available. As a conventional boiler has a cast iron heat exchanger and components, Poly B causes the boiler to rust away from the inside out at an accelerated pace.*

**Q:** What can a strata do to address the concerns associated with Poly B piping?

**CF:** *There are a number of options available. One option is, a chemical treatment that is added to the water in the system, which will stop any further corrosion, however it will not reverse existing damage. If a strata were to proceed with this option a chemical treatment plan will need to be established as the chemicals need to be repeatedly re-introduced into the system. A concern is the chemical water and drinking water is also only separated by a small backflow preventor – in fact, some municipalities have banned chemical use altogether for this reason.*

*Another option is to have a heat exchanger added to the system, so that the water from the Poly B won't come into contact with the boiler – this is in effect a double boiler system. A drawback of a heat exchanger is it adds multiple new parts which increases the risk of possible failure plus there is significant installation costs.*

*The most common solution to poly-b piping is to remove all ferrous (rustable) components of the system. The boiler gets replaced with a high efficient, stainless steel unit utilizing all non-ferrous metal connections and parts so that no corrosion can take place going forward.*

**Q:** How long does a hot water tank last?

**CF:** *A conventional hot water tank should last between 10 and 15 years.*

**Q:** What are the signs to look for with respect to the failure of a hot water tank?

**CF:** *Tanks fail in one of two ways. They either break inside and cause what can be significant flooding, or they develop a pin-hole leak. Some signs of impending failure are rust developing around the top ring of the tank or rust near any water inlet/outlet or any seams on the tank. NOTE – some homeowner's insurance policies include a rider that the tank must be replaced at a specific age, otherwise the policy is invalid.*

**Q:** What is the deal with "Tank less or On Demand" water heaters as opposed to the conventional hot water tank?

**CF:** *Conventional hot water tanks are about 55-65% efficient and when the hot water in the tank runs out, you have to wait for it to heat up again. On demand systems never run out of hot water (imagine a 4 hour shower) are up to 98% efficient and in our marketplace will stay in service up to 20 years (primarily stainless steel construction).*

**Q:** Are there presently any rebates for water heaters?

**CF:** *Yes. The Tank-less (On demand) systems have a \$500.00 rebate, a qualifying conventional tank with 69% efficiency is set at \$200.00 and a "condensing" hot water tank is currently at \$1000.00. It is truly the right time to upgrade your water heating appliance!*

**Q:** How/why does renting work?

**CF:** *The concept of renting water heaters (conventional and On Demand) was introduced in the eastern parts of Canada some time ago and has become a proven model for most of the country in successive years (the adoption rate in parts of Ontario is up to 90% for example). The benefits to the consumer include avoiding the large initial cost of the unit and never having to concern themselves with the costs of maintenance or repair. In addition, the rental program is highly flexible, allowing for a buyout each year with the amount being reduced annually.*

**Q:** Why do I require new venting within my home for a modern new furnace?

**CF:** *All new furnaces are above 90% efficiency, which means that they are condensing. Essentially steam comes out of the exhaust so the old metal exhaust can't be used. We need to create a new exhaust route - usually to the side wall and usually 2" in diameter. We also need to install a 2nd pipe to bring combustion air back to the furnace. Strata owner's wishing to install a new furnace should review the registered bylaws for their strata corporation to determine if there are any alteration restrictions and any approval criteria prior to proceeding.*