

Buying a High-Efficiency Furnace

1. Before you buy, it's a good idea to first plug the air leaks in your house and perhaps upgrade the insulation. Doing so will allow you to buy a smaller furnace, saving you money on the purchase price and ongoing operating costs.
2. If you want to apply for a Natural Resources Canada grant (\$300 to \$500, depending on the efficiency rating and whether you include an energy-saving, variable-speed motor) you'll need to have an [energy audit](#) conducted before you buy the furnace.
3. Check the [Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Contractors of Canada website](#) for a listing of local contractors qualified to install high-efficiency furnaces. Get estimates and references from at least two experienced installers and ask for a heat loss calculation, used to determine the size of furnace needed. A high-efficiency furnace should be sized no more than 30-40 per cent larger than the calculated heating requirements of your house.
4. With the help of your installer, look for a furnace that meets your budget and the energy efficiency you want to achieve (high-efficiency furnaces have an annual fuel utilization efficiency (AFUE) rating of between 90 and 97 per cent). High-efficiency furnaces have an Energy Star® label.
5. It's also worth looking for furnaces with a variable-speed motor, which uses considerably less electricity to drive the fan than a conventional motor. Ask your installer to ensure the motor is properly sized for your needs.
6. When you get a quote from an installer, ask if it includes the following:
 - Cost of any needed ductwork, electrical or chimney modifications
 - Disposal of the old furnace
 - All permits and inspections
 - A programmable thermostat.