

Home & garden

You are here:

[Home & garden](#) > [Home furnishings](#) > [Reliable furnaces 11/02](#)



November 2002



Which furnaces hold up best?

You also might be interested in

- [Gas furnaces 7/03](#)
- [Recalls](#)
- [Manufacturers](#)



Discussion

Read Q&A's with expert Peter Sawchuk and [continue the conversation](#) with fellow subscribers.

With a typical installed price of \$2,300, a gas furnace is a major investment. What are the best choices? Our surveys of 500 professional heating installers and some 38,000 subscribers offer guidance.

Gas-fired, forced-air furnaces from *American Standard* and *Trane*, both made by American Standard Companies, were more reliable than average, based on subscriber responses to our 2001 Annual Questionnaire regarding furnaces installed between 1995 and 2001.

Time and climate can take a toll on any gas furnace, and our survey took those factors into account. Nearly 40 percent of furnaces installed as recently as 1995 required repairs, compared with about 7 percent for those installed within the past two years. Furnaces in cold climates were nearly twice as likely to have needed repairs as those in warmer areas.

Buying a reliable furnace is especially important if you're considering one with a high annual fuel-utilization-efficiency (AFUE) rating. Data from professional installers show that furnaces with an AFUE rating of 90 percent or higher--the most expensive to buy and install--tend to require more repairs, most likely because of their added complexity.

Some repairs were free; others cost our readers an average of \$115 each. If repairing a 12-year-old furnace will cost more than about half the cost of buying and installing a new one, you're probably better off with a new unit.

First, though, see if the old furnace is really broken by performing these checks:

- ▶ If the furnace cycles on and off frequently, check the air filter; a clogged filter can cut airflow significantly.
- ▶ If you aren't getting heat, check the thermostat for loose wires, dead batteries (in an electronic thermostat), and such.
- ▶ If the furnace isn't running, check for a burned-out fuse or tripped circuit breaker. Either will cut power to the furnace's fan or circuit board. But make sure any nearby emergency switches for the furnace are in the On position.

This article was also published in *Consumer Reports* magazine.
[Click here for subscription information.](#)