

A man wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, light-colored trousers, and a white hard hat is seen from behind. He is holding a large roll of blueprints under his arms. The background is a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall tone is professional and optimistic.

If a heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractor's bid is too good to believe, don't.

5 QUESTIONS A SAVVY CONSUMER SHOULD ASK.



Ask the right questions before you sign a contract and you can save yourself a lot of headaches.


While it may take a little effort, the beauty of getting bids is that it helps protect you from overpaying and non-licensed work. Even so, if you're like most homeowners, you'll probably lean toward the low bid. That's OK but remember: the low bid could be low because the contractor is cutting corners by not going through the steps that will assure you of the best, most energy efficient job possible. So before you say "yes" to that low bid, here are 5 simple questions you should ask.

1

Will permits be pulled?

If a contractor says he doesn't need to pull the proper permits, you don't need that contractor. Because if a contractor has a "C20" state license, California state law says he has to. Not pulling permits may save the contractor a bit of time, but down the road it could cost you. In some locales, for example, when a house is sold all work done without required permits must be disclosed. That's when permit costs plus penalties may have to be paid.

Estimate	
True Climate Contractors 100 Anyplace Rd. Ameritown, US 10095 For all your Heating and Air-Conditioning needs. Emergency Service Available.	Customer Name <i>Sally Normal</i>
	Street Address <i>123 Normal Drive</i>
	City <i>Common Town</i> Zip Code <i>90332</i>
	Phone Number <i>800-452-9000</i>
	Invoice Number <i>56488</i>
	Job Start Date: <i>02/30/06</i>
Job Description: <i>Replace condensors, inspect filter. Check all ducting seals. Evaluate furnace and heating element. Check thermostat</i>	



**Permitted and certified
installation of a new HVAC
system assures that you're
getting the right equipment,
installed correctly.**

CONDENSER UNIT CARE INFORMATION
See page 10 for details.
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4

Who will you get to verify your new HVAC system?

There are other rating services out there, but only CHEERS (California Home Energy Efficiency Rating Services), the first rating service approved by the California Energy Commission, has upwards to 500 trained and certified raters. They're raters who can pre-test and then verify the HVAC work done. (In fact, CHEERS raters usually keep HVAC contractors informed of all the current state guidelines and latest installation techniques).

Yes, there is a cost associated with this service. But, whether the certification is done by a CHEERS or another rating service, the certification is required. And certification is your best guarantee of a job done right.

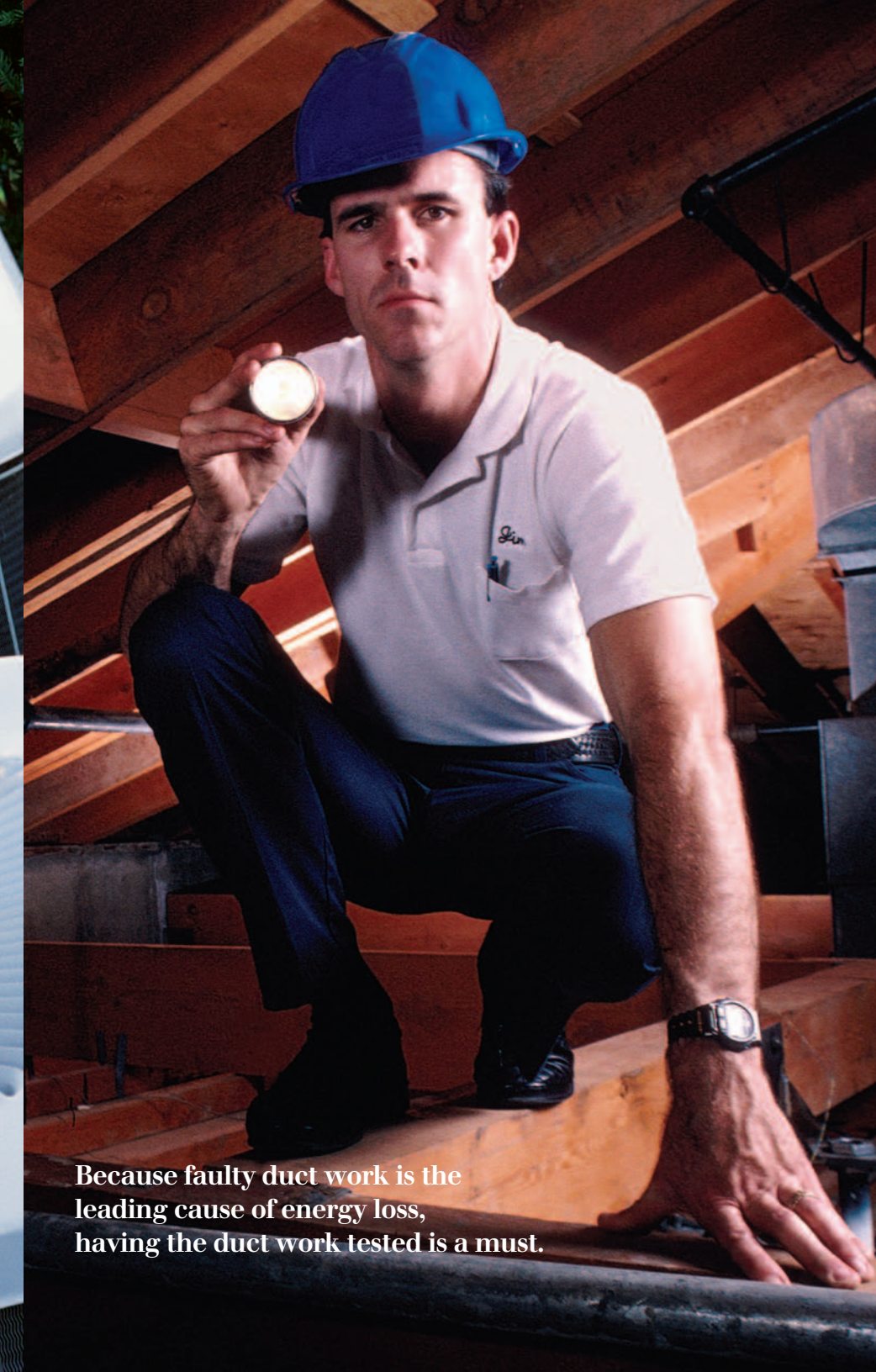
5

How much will this add in time and money?

Doing things right does add a small cost in dollars and hours. But it's nothing compared to the nuisance and irritation that comes with failing an inspection, paying the fines attached to pulling late permits and getting the contractor to fix his mistakes. That's why asking these few questions, before the work is done, is important in the selection of an HVAC contractor.

The answers to these five questions may lead you to conclude that the low bid isn't always the best bid. That's OK. Because if you get the job done right, you'll end up saving money and time. It's that simple.





Because faulty duct work is the leading cause of energy loss, having the duct work tested is a must.

2

Will the duct system be pre and post tested?

If your heating and air conditioning system is not keeping you cool in hot weather and warm in cold weather, it's likely the duct system leaks. In fact, if the house is more than 5-7 years old, it's very likely leaks in the ductwork are costing you by letting warm and/or cool air escape, while all the other system components may be in great working order. It just makes sense to have the ductwork tested before spending for equipment that may not be needed.

Some contractors may tell you that duct testing is a waste of time and money and to just trust them. It isn't and you shouldn't. Pre-testing your heating, ventilating and air conditioning system tells you exactly where the problems are. Pre-testing should be part of a contractor's bid. It may cost a few dollars, but it'll be a lot less than replacing a major unit (like a compressor or heat pump) that doesn't need replacing. What's more, it makes a lot of sense to have pre and post testing done by an independent third party.

3

Will the HVAC work done be independently verified?

Some contractors don't like having their work checked. But California requires it. Independent verification is the only way the state, and you, can be sure of compliance with current California energy standards. If the work done results in a system that complies with those standards, great. If it doesn't comply...well, your contractor may have some more work to do. Verification may cost a few more dollars, but you'll know for sure the work was done to meet efficiency standards; that your ductwork is sealed and properly distributing warm and cool air throughout your house.



Having your HVAC work verified by a certified CHEERS rater is the only way to know it complies with California energy standards (is this true, short answer is no, but for the most part it is the most cost-effective way).



SYSTEM ON
TEMPORARY

	Time	Temp	
Set Clock/Day	Ahead	Warmer	Run Program
Set Schedule	Back	Cooler	Hold Temp

Fan
Auto On

System
Cool Off Heat

**Simple questions.
Simple answers.
Easy decision.**

You and your family will be living with the work done by your heating, ventilation and air conditioning contractor for a long time. So, make sure you've found a contractor who really knows what he's doing, whose bid covers all the bases and who answers all your questions directly. When you get direct answers to your questions, you may discover that the low bid isn't really the best bid. But, when you find a heating, ventilating and air conditioning contractor who refuses to cut corners and can assure you that the work he'll be doing is needed and fairly priced, that's the contractor you want to work with.

The bottom line? Get the job done right and, in the long run you'll save time, money and energy.



Get it done right. Save money, too.



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California Home Energy
Efficiency Rating Services

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1-800-4CHEERS (424-3377)
www.HVACDoneRight.com