

How to find a good HVAC contractor

Upgrading your HVAC system is a big investment, and you want to hire a trustworthy contractor to do the work. The right HVAC contractor will ensure you get the best solution for your home and avoid problems like installing the wrong equipment or installing it incorrectly.

A good installer will have installed a lot of heat pump systems, and will be enthusiastic about their advantages. They will be able to specify the right system for your home, help with incentives and give you good advice about any weatherization or air sealing problems that you should address.

Tips for selecting a good contractor

Get quotes from three contractors

Get and compare three similar bids from reputable contractors so you can better assess quality and price.

Expect them to evaluate your home

They should assess your insulation, ducts, windows and doors, electrical panel capacity, & current HVAC system.

Ask lots of questions

Get written answers so you can compare approaches and expertise while you're comparing quotes. See the next page for a list of suggested questions.

Ask about incentives

Good contractors will be familiar with local, state and federal incentives that can save you thousands of dollars. Do your own incentive research as well to make sure you save the most.



Finding Contractors

[SwitchIsOn.org](https://www.switchson.org)

Available in California and Washington with a searchable database of electrification-friendly contractors.

[Rewiring America](https://www.rewiringamerica.com)

This national online tool links you to qualified contractor networks in your Zip Code.

Check contractor websites for positive messaging about heat pumps and electrification.

Tell them about your future plans

If you plan to make other upgrades, like installing a heat pump water heater, induction range, or EV charger, you may be able to save money by combining the electrical work into a single project.

Questions to ask your HVAC contractor

Make sure you get the best solution for your home.

Will you assess the insulation and weatherization of my home?

If they don't look in the attic or crawlspace to assess the insulation of your home, and look for obvious air sealing problems, don't hire them.

Will you do a load calculation to determine the size system I need?

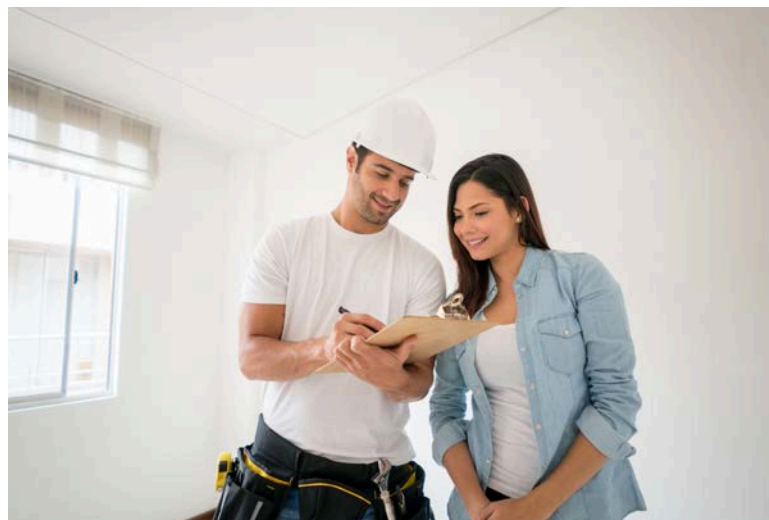
Ask to see it. If they can't show you a print-out of the calculation, they probably did not do one. If they didn't do a load calculation you shouldn't work with that contractor because they will not know how to properly size your equipment.

Are the ducts in my home operating effectively in all the rooms?

Make sure they inspect the ducts and ask them what they found. In many cases, simple fixes to existing ductwork can dramatically improve efficiency.

Where is the best place to locate the external unit?

You typically do not want this right outside of bedrooms or living areas if possible. External units come in different configurations and some are narrower so they can be used in smaller spaces or between buildings.



How noisy is the external unit?

Ask to see the loudness specs and compare them to other equipment to make sure you get a unit that is not too loud if that is a concern for you.

What is the efficiency of the system?

To compare systems, you will need to know the SEER rating for cooling and HSPF ratings for heating. The higher the numbers the more efficient the equipment is—that translates to better heating and cooling and lower operating costs. To ensure you can qualify for tax credits, your equipment must meet certain efficiency criteria—be sure to discuss this with your installer.

What is the coldest temperature that the heat pump will operate?

A high efficiency heat pump will operate down to 15 degrees and as low as minus 13 degrees. If it only operates effectively to 30 degrees or higher, that means you will need back up heating for those cold days. This can be avoided with more efficient equipment that is readily available.