

Heat Pump Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will a heat pump provide all the heat needed in the winter?

A heat pump ordinarily becomes less effective below 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit ambient temperature. Below that, it may be necessary to supplement the heat provided by the heat pump. (See "Why Not Just Use Electric Heat" above.)

Q. How expensive are heat pumps?

A. The initial cost of heat pump equipment can be 10-15% more than units which use natural or LP Gas for heating, but this difference is minimal when compared to the cost of natural gas or LP Gas service setup.

Q. Do heat pumps have to exchange heat with outside air?

A. No. Different models of heat pumps can exchange heat with ground water, making them less susceptible to outside air temperature. However, ground water heat pumps are somewhat more expensive to install.

Q. What's the difference between a SEER rating and a HSPF rating on a heat pump?

A. The SEER rating is the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating, and is a measure of the cooling efficiency of a heat pump or air conditioner. Federal regulations on 1/1/06 will require a SEER of 13 or more for new air conditioners or heat pumps. However, some models score much higher than the minimum, meaning they will save many more energy dollars.

The HSPF is the Heating Seasonal Performance Factor which measures the heating efficiency of a heat pump. Federal regulations on 1/1/06 require a HSPF of 6.8 or more for new units. As with SEER ratings, the higher the HSPF, the more energy dollars the heat pump will save.

Q. How do I know if my electric heat is on when I'm using my heat pump?

A. Most heat pump thermostats have a small light or icon which lights when the supplemental electric heater is in use. This light is normally labeled "AUX HT" for auxiliary heat.

Q. What does the EM HT switch do?

