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## Washington State Energy Code: So, what's it going to cost me?

Op-Ed by: Rodd Walker (owner)

One of the energy code changes we most feared has been set into effect... (At least partially, or temporarily). In 2010, a new code was adopted as a part of the larger 2009 Washington State Energy Code, which requires professional testing—and more than likely sealing—of all ductwork anytime a furnace, heat pump or air conditioner is installed. This includes new construction, remodel and to most industry professional's dismay...just when you're simply replacing your home's existing system.

Very few homes over 10-years-old will pass this test. Numerous studies (and personal expertise) have shown that most homes in our region have substantially leaky ductwork. If the ductwork surpasses the maximum leakage rate, then the homeowner is required to seal all ducts.

Now don't get me wrong- we at Blue Flame believe in sealing (and insulating) ductwork! But what cost is this to the consumer? Well in some cases, it's not possible to seal the ductwork, at which point the code states that another agency will have to be contracted to verify that the installing company did all they could to reduce leakage. More cost to consumer.

### So, what's the solution?

The State decided to make a temporary ruling, which began January 1, 2011 and lasts 120 days, that still requires testing of ductwork, but does not yet require sealing. Blue Flame will at this point, supply you and the inspector with a report on the leakage rate, and also go over an estimate on cost should you decide to repair/seal/insulate. Not yet a requirement—but not far off.

Duct testing only takes an hour or so on the average house, but it's most often completed on a separate day, after the install. If leaks are in difficult access areas such as the joints, or under insulation, the cost could be anywhere from \$250-\$2000 to seal and re-insulate.

If you've been considering upgrading your system, now is a good time to look into it, before the additional cost comes into play. Blue Flame offers a duct testing service, which can help you feel prepared. The cost depends on house size, but generally ranges from \$199-299.

### How do we test ductwork?

First, we seal off all return air grilles and all warm supply registers, and any fresh air inlets into the ductwork. We then use a "duct blaster" (which is basically a high powered fan) and force a set amount of pressure into the ductwork, and use an digital instrument to determine the leakage rate.

For more information, check out our state's energy code site (run and proctored by Washington State University), and be sure the check out the duct sealing video at the bottom of the page!

<http://www.energy.wsu.edu/BuildingEfficiency/EnergyCode.aspx>

## Q & A WITH SERVICE MANAGER JOHN FALLETICH



**Q: I just bought a furnace and I don't typically buy extended warranties. Should I buy one for my new system?**

**A:** It's always a good idea to protect large investments. The evolution of technology has meant that equipment has become more advanced and more complicated—and repairs have become more and more expensive. One major part replaced in the systems' lifetime and the warranty has about paid for itself—so we always promote extended warranties. However, they can only be purchased for a limited time.

Here are the facts:


- > York extended warranties can be purchased one year from install date.
- > Trane equipment warranties are as follows: A homeowner can purchase an extended warranty up until 5 years after the equipment was installed.

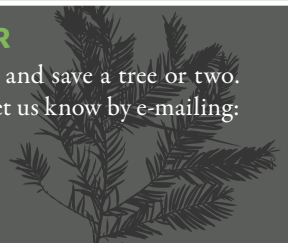
The extended warranty becomes effective from the original installation date. Example #1: The homeowner buys a 5 year extended warranty today and their equipment was installed 1 year ago, then they would have 4 years remaining. Example #2: The homeowner buys an extended warranty today and their equipment was installed 4 years ago. They would probably choose the 10 year extended warranty so they would have 6 years remaining.

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"We have known the owners since their Puget Sound Energy days and have recommended your company for a long time. My mom is a customer of yours and a little while ago she had her furnace serviced. I feel comfortable with the service you provide for her, but she is glowing after each visit from your company. Thank you to you and your staff...for being caring, thoughtful and knowledgeable." — Susan B.

Have a Blue Flame experience to share? Submit your thoughts on AngiesList.com!

**Did you know?**

Blue Flame sells filters! Dirty filters are the leading cause for service calls. Disposable filters should be changed every 3-6 months. Filters range from \$10-44. Call to order yours today (we'll help you with size).

**For more information please call (425) 771-7139.**

"We had a personable, understandable, and fair-priced estimate. Installation was scheduled promptly. The installer was knowledgeable, courteous, and efficient. He went above and beyond what was expected. I would strongly recommend you give these guys a try." — Greg S.

**BLUE FLAME EMPLOYEE RECIPE CORNER**

**NW's Mashed Potato-less**

- 1 medium head of cauliflower
- 1 clove of minced garlic or 3 tsp of garlic powder
- ¼ stick of diced butter
- Splash of milk or cream (optional)

Thoroughly rinse cauliflower head, remove the majority of the stem, and break up florets into small pieces. Toss cauliflower into a large boiling pot of water. Ensure that all cauliflower is covered by water. Let boil on high for 7-10 minutes, or until it swells and is soft. Drain water and transfer cauliflower in a blender. Pulsate on high until large chunks are gone, and then add butter, garlic, and cream (optional). Blend on high until texture is smooth and whipped. Results are surprising!

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