

VINCENT'S NEWS

The 'Van-Go' Gallery



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Did you know...

...this month features a guest columnist?

The technical section comes from one of our technicians who relates a pretty serious situation that he encountered on a recent job.

THROUGH MY EYES

Big changes are around the corner for when you want to replace your air conditioner. The most pressing change has to do with the new higher minimum efficiency standards for air conditioners and heat pumps that take effect on January 1, 2023. These new regulations are part of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) efforts to reduce energy consumption in the United States.

I don't want to get into the weeds with all the rules and numbers. If you want the details, you can find them online. But I do want to give you a 'heads up' about how this could affect you. This is especially relevant if you have an older air conditioner – or one that leaks or has

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"Wherever you see a 'Vincent's Van Go' you know the job will be a work of art."



Above, VHP tech Brendan Squires is shown holding the copper gas line that had broken and was filling up one of our customer's homes with gas! You can read about it below.

NIGHTMARE GAS LEAK

Just imagine this scenario: You're at home at the end of the day and a SEMCO representative shows up on your doorstep. He tells you to immediately evacuate your home. A serious gas leak has been discovered and it's in your home. In fact, the danger is so serious that the electricity and gas need to be shut off from the outside due to fear of an explosion! Then the fire department is called out to air out your house to dispel the natural

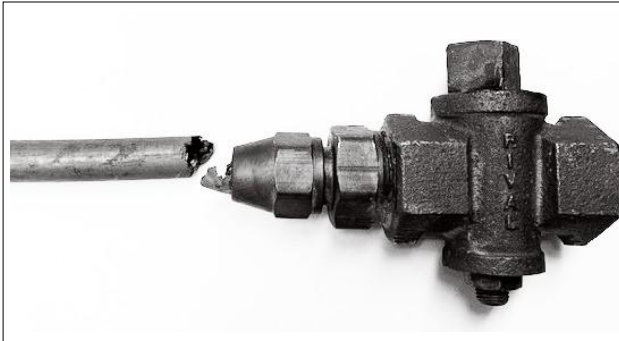
gas that has accumulated. This happened last month for one of our long-time customers.

I was called out the next morning to investigate and locate the leak. As I entered the home, I noticed that a strong smell of gas still lingered despite the gas having been off for many hours. The first thing I did was a visual inspection, and I could not see anything. So I proceeded to pressurize the gas lines with air. Surprisingly, the pressure wouldn't rise. Then I heard

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Gas Line... (Continued from Pg.1)

a rush of air in the mechanical room. Air was pouring out of a section of the gas line. This was odd because there was no gas appliance there. I soon discovered



Here is a close-up of the failed copper gas line showing where it had snapped off. Also note the old style gas valve. It was also replaced because it is common for this style of gas valve to leak. These are the sort of safety hazards that a Whole Home Gas Line Safety catches.

the reason for this; a copper gas line that had been attached to an exterior gas lamp had broken off and was lying nearby. Gas had been pouring into their house through a wide-open gas line and filling up their basement!

Once I found the problem the fix didn't take long to have them back in business with their utilities and heat back on.

Why did the gas line fail?

Copper gas lines only have a life expectancy of about 20 years. Any gas line material can leak, but copper has an especially high rate of leaking and failure. Some municipalities have even gone so far as to ban its use. Leaking copper gas lines are common, and they sometimes even break with little contact, or as

in the situation above, no contact at all.

Gas had been pouring into their house through a wide-open gas line and filling up their basement!

Other common gas leak areas are old gas shutoffs, pilot tubes on water heaters and boilers, and any old piping. Extremely humid crawlspaces also present issues for gas lines as

humidity can cause iron lines to corrode. If you are on a propane system, gas safety is all the more important since propane is heavier than air. While natural gas is lighter than air, propane will pool.

The best way to avoid a serious situation is to have your gas lines periodically inspected and checked for leaks. This is part of regular home maintenance. If you haven't had your gas lines checked for safety or you're concerned about the gas lines in your home, don't worry. VHP is here to help you. We offer a Whole Home Gas Line Safety Service. See the enclosed insert for more details about it.

- Brendan Squires

What Our Clients Are Saying...

"Over the years we've had the pleasure of meeting several members of the VHP staff for various heating, cooling and plumbing needs. We've found them all to be friendly, professional, and efficient. Our annual furnace tune-up and inspection was no different with Brandon this year. And as always, Nancy keeps it all running smoothly!"

- Richard Hewitt, Jeddo

Through My Eyes (Continued from Pg. 1)

service issues. If you were planning on waiting to replace it, doing it this year may be a better idea. Especially if your furnace is in good shape. Let me explain.

An AC Replacement Will Cost More Under the New DOE Standards

It won't come as a surprise that the new higher efficiency rules means that it will cost more to replace or add air conditioning. But what may be a surprise is if upgrading your AC means you must replace your furnace too. Here's why:

Achieving increased AC efficiency requires an air conditioner to be physically larger. This is because more heat transfer surface area is needed to achieve the efficiency gains mandated. To do this, a lot more tubing and aluminum fins are added, increasing the size and the cost.

But what may be a surprise is if upgrading your AC means you must replace your furnace too.

For the condenser - the part of the AC on the outside of the house - the larger size is typically workable. The problem can be the inside AC coil - the part of the AC attached to

your furnace. For AC Coils 'larger' means 'taller'. Unfortunately, a taller AC coil may not physically fit in the space above your furnace.

Why You May Need a New Furnace When All You Wanted Was a New Air Conditioner

Typically, there are only two ways to meet this challenge. The first way is to replace the furnace with a shorter model that allows the taller AC coil to fit. All new furnaces are more compact for this reason. The second way is to use a shorter and less efficient AC Coil that fits but is not rated to meet the higher efficiency standards. Under the new rules, this second option won't be available. If the furnace is too tall for the AC Coil, it will have to be replaced.

Don't get me wrong. I think it's wise to replace your furnace and air conditioner as a system. But I also believe that you as a consumer should have the freedom to choose. This new federal mandate takes away that possibility. Fortunately, you still have 7 months before the new rules take effect. Give us a call if you would like us to help you explore your options should you want to do something before the new standards take effect.

- Daniel Squires



Ongoing training is needed to keep up with all the changes in our industry.

Here is a team photo from one of our sessions.



National Pet Week (May 1st through 7th)

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Guest columnist
Brendan Squires is an experienced service tech and also the son of Daniel Squires. Outside of work, Brendan's main focus is his wife, Chelsie, and their young son, Atticus Ray Squires.

B F Q S I K T T M A X E I T F T G L L E G Z
Y R A N A C E E U E J J A X P N E I T X I N
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A E H R E T O W H Q Z R S E O N U J J G J N
H A M S T E R C H I N C H I L L A F O B I O

Cats
Mouse
Reptiles
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Humor Section

A man is boasting to a friend about his new hearing aid.

"It's the most expensive one I've ever had.
It cost me \$3,500!"

His friend asks, "What kind is it?"

The braggart says, "Oh, about half-past four."



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