



HOUSING TIPS

Forced air systems sometimes have high registers and low registers—high ones are for air conditioning and are to be open in the summer, low ones closed, in winter open the low ones and aim the louvers at the floor and close the high ones. Make sure no registers are blocked by furniture and that you change the filter at least quarterly—monthly cleaning of filter(s) and registers is best.

Hot water heating systems (radiators) have little bleed valves on the top of one end of the radiator. The hardware store sells a radiator key to open these, bleed the radiators once the heat has been on for a couple of weeks. To bleed a radiator open the valve, allow the “hissing” of the air to escape each radiator, stop and close the valve once you get about a ½ cup of water. Keep radiators clear of things so air can freely circulate around them.

Even the best weather stripping will generally require additional seasonal weather stripping in the winter. There are weather stripping tapes, Morelite, plastic sheets, etc., things available to seal drafts and add another layer of “storm window” to the glass areas that is very effective.

Lay a towel or rug across the bottom of doors and window sills to close off drafts. Make sure the fireplace damper is closed when not in use. Close blinds or curtains at night on cold nights and open them to let the sun warm you in the day, in summer keep the sun out to save on A/C.

Storm windows help in summer as well as winter—close them when ventilation is not needed. Vacuum the sill and track of the storms so that the storm can securely latch and to prevent trash from building up and rotting the wood sill. To seal the wood sash to the sill better, add stick-on foam weather stripping to the bottom of the window, and at the cracks at top. Make sure the two drain holes are open where the storm meets the sill so that rain can drain out.

Gas and oil fired furnaces and hot water heaters need air so the exhaust will go up the chimney. For basements where these are usually located in houses, a certain amount of exterior air coming in is needed; if these are located on upper floors make sure the vents are louvered doors are kept clear and clean. Do not store objects near these appliances; make sure fresh air can get to the flames.

Trash for private residences is collected twice a week by the city. You will be ticketed if placed in public view earlier than the evening before the next day’s collection. Seal everything in plastic bags. If animals get into the bags, clean up the mess. In a building where there is private collection, place trash in the designated areas, in sealed plastic bags. If you spill something, again, clean it up. Recycled items need to be sorted as required by the city. D.C. Special Collection will remove on scheduled Wednesdays, large, bulky, or unusual items, but you must call to get it placed on the collection list and they will tell you which date—do not put it at the curb in advance more than a day or two. Please call 311 to set up a pick up.