



The Commercial Inspector

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A Monthly Newsletter From National Property Inspections

ask the inspector

Q. What will the inspector check on a building's HVAC system?

A. When inspecting a building's HVAC system, your building inspector will check the heating and air-conditioning system through visual observation, provide a description of the system and report on issues found in the system. The inspector should complete the following:



- » Identify the basic type of heat-generating equipment, air conditioning and ventilation and the means of distribution; this will include towers, chillers, package units, thermal storage equipment and split systems
- » Perform a visual assessment of the equipment's condition, including the presence of damage, rust or anything improper
- » Record the age of the equipment using data tag information
- » Document upgrades or replacements and the level of maintenance

snapshots from the field

What Is This Picture?



- A) A prototype of a new V-6 engine
- B) A lift station for the building
- C) An air compressor
- D) A compressor for the chiller system

(answer on the back)

- » Provide an opinion based on visual observation if equipment is shut down or not operational
- » Document any special or unusual heating system or equipment, e.g., solar heat
- » Identify any special or unusual air-conditioning and ventilation systems or equipment, including but not limited to cold storage systems and special computer cooling equipment

Generally, observations of flue connections, chimney interiors or boiler stacks and inspection of any tenant-owned equipment are not part of the commercial building inspection. Furthermore, entering of plenum or confined-space areas is not part of the standard inspection.



The inspection report to share the findings is usually a combination narrative and checklist format that includes representative photos of the heating and air-conditioning systems, as well as photos of the issues documented. The report can assist you in your purchase or lease decision, and it can be a good first step in completing the due diligence process.



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maintenance matters

It's Time for Summer Air Conditioner Maintenance

Your commercial building's air conditioner must be properly maintained to perform at the highest level of efficiency. Much of the necessary cleaning and tune-up work is performed during preventive maintenance visits. However, you should routinely perform the tasks that do not require technical expertise, especially since the most intense heat (and the greatest stress on the unit) generally occurs between preventive maintenance visits.

Monitor the Condensing Unit

Condensing units can be open to dirt, leaves and other debris that can clog airflow and reduce efficiency. Given the delicate nature of the fins inside the condensing unit, a full cleaning is best left to a trusted professional.



Check the Filter

How often you change the filter depends on the type of space and how the unit is used.

Clean the Evaporator

If you choose to operate your business without a maintenance plan, then it is important to at least clean the unit's evaporator coil a couple of times a year.

Please keep in mind that these are only basic methods of caring for your air conditioner. You should have the unit and system inspected by a qualified professional annually to ensure safety and efficiency.

Did You Know?

NPI Is Your One-stop Shop

NPI is your one-stop inspection shop. Many of our inspectors offer additional services, such as radon testing, mold testing and termite inspections. However, if your inspector doesn't offer a service that you want for your building, he or she will gladly contact the proper professionals for you and schedule the additional services you need. That's just one more way that NPI provides outstanding service to our clients.

Snapshots from the field

The correct answer is D. The photo shows a compressor for the chiller system.

for your information

Humidity in Your Building

Is the humidity in your building too high? High humidity levels contribute to mold growth and dust mites, neither of which is healthy for a commercial building.

So, what's the right amount of humidity? A level of 50 percent or lower is ideal for most people, but you don't want the level too low, either, especially in the winter months. To mitigate high humidity, add ventilation, use dehumidifiers and run the air conditioning.