

IAQ by Gord Cooke

Air Conditioning and Ventilation



This newsletter will find most HVAC contractors in the throes of the busy air conditioning season. It is important to remember that air conditioning is relatively new to the housing market and it changes dramatically the way houses work. On a very simple level, homeowners used to rely on natural ventilation as a cooling strategy and as a result, helped ensure adequate air quality throughout the summer months. This is why we originally thought of ventilation and HRVs as a winter only requirement. In fact, because homeowners don't use windows as much as they used to (in any season) and because air quality – both indoor and outdoor – is generally worse in the summer, when quoting AC systems, HVAC contractors need to remind homeowners of air quality issues. AC does provide an excellent opportunity for homeowners to control the quality of air in their home by closing windows and avoiding bringing in too much of the hot, humid outside air and its associated dust and pollen pollutants. This makes ventilation and specifically energy recovery ventilation a perfect match with air conditioning; limit uncontrollable natural ventilation and add back just the right amount of fresh filtered air that has been conditioned by the ERV to optimize energy savings and moisture content of the air. In many cases, homeowners are prompted to consider air conditioning because someone in the household suffers from respiratory problems. Certainly these clients and many others need to be properly educated on air quality and what a professional HVAC contractor's role is in, ensuring the healthiest possible indoor air for households. Include a conversation about IAQ and ventilation on all your AC calls this summer.

Gord Cooke
Special Contributor