



Do you know where your filter is?

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During the winter months, your forced-air furnace works overtime to keep your family warm and cozy. Most people don't think about what this means. Each time the furnace comes on, it's taking air out of the house and circulating it through the filter(s) before it blows that warm air into your living room and bedrooms. If you're anything like me, winter is your favorite time to burn holiday candles in the living room, bedrooms, even in the bathroom while you soak in a hot bubble bath. Furnace filters collect everything that is in the air in your home including dust, pet dander, even smoke from cigars, cigarettes, incense and candles.

When a filter gets "full" and is near the point of being clogged, your air flow decreases and the furnace has to work harder to pull air through the filter and get it back into the house. Your furnace may be running on longer cycles and your operating efficiency can go down, possibly raising your utility bills. Manufacturers suggest that filters be changed every 3-4 months. Get to know your duct system and how quickly your filters fill up with debris. Some houses need the filters changed more frequently, some less frequently. However often you decide to change the filters, keep in mind that clogged filters are one of the most common causes of furnace failure. Changing them regularly could save you a service call charge!

Some families opt to install an electronic air cleaner in their home. Here at Stephens Heating we use Amana whole-house air cleaners, other contractors may use Honeywell. The whole-house air cleaner is installed in your ductwork near the furnace and captures airborne particles that measure as small as 0.3 microns, that's 600 times smaller than the tip of your pencil point! Since particles this small have the best chance of being inhaled, people with allergies will appreciate having an electronic air cleaner in the house. The cell(s) can be removed and cleaned in the dishwasher when the time comes, just be sure to use liquid detergent and make sure the cells are thoroughly dry before you re-install them.

What size are they? (In microns)*

- Human Hair 3 - 200
- Pollens 10 - 100
- Pet Dander 0.2 - 100
- Plant Spores 10 - 70
- Fungi 0.5 - 5
- Bacteria 0.3 - 3
- Tobacco smoke 0.003 - 0.04

**information provided by Honeywell*

Visit <http://yourhome.honeywell.com> to learn more about air quality products for your home. You can even sign up to receive an e-mail reminder for scheduled filter changes!

Whichever air filtration option you choose for your home, be sure to keep up on maintenance. Remember: this is the air your family is breathing.

