

Press Release

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BEFORE YOU TOUCH THAT THERMOSTAT, TAKE A FEW SAFETY STEPS

COHOES, NY September 29, 2010: Now that autumn is here, temperatures will be dropping and furnaces will be turned back on. Many homes use an oil-fueled furnace to provide heat during the colder months. While oil furnaces are more efficient and run cleaner than their predecessors, soot still builds up within the furnace over an extended period of time. This can not only stain and blacken the furnace, but can also reduce its burning efficiency. Cleaning the soot out of the furnace restores its cleanliness and helps it run better.

ServiceMaster Clean® of Upstate New York, the leader in fire and smoke damage restoration, offers these tips to home owners confronted with dirty furnaces prior to turning them on this season:

- Shut down the furnace if it is currently running. Wait for the heat to dissipate before touching the furnace or opening its front metal panel. Be careful as the outside may feel cool while inside the furnace is still hot enough to burn you.
- Slide the oil filter out. The filter is typically inserted near the furnace's back combustion chamber. Wipe down the filter with a damp rag. If it is heavily soiled, replace the filter completely.
- Use a hard-bristled brush and brush the inside of the oil furnace. Use brisk up-down strokes in a scrubbing motion, brushing soot particles and debris toward the floor of the furnace. Once the entire inside of the furnace has been brushed, scrape the refuse into a dustpan and discard.
- Vacuum the inside of the furnace to pick up the fine, loose soot particles.
- Wipe down the inside of the oil furnace with a damp rag. Dampen with water, and avoid using cleaners or solvents as this may create dangerous fumes or fire hazards if residues are left inside the furnace. Replace metal panel and turn on.

Sometimes the soot can escape from the furnace and cover your walls. Do not wet soot covered surfaces especially porous surfaces such as lampshades, wall board and ceiling tiles. A Chemical Dry Cleaning Sponge is the ideal way to remove soot from walls. To use, wipe the stain with the completely dry sponge. When the sponge becomes saturated with soot, wash it out and allow to air dry. After removing as much residue as possible, wet a soft cloth or

sponge with paint thinner or rubbing alcohol. Never use water based cleaners. Gently wipe the remaining stain until gone. Allow to air dry.

If there is significant damage, always call your insurance company first to see if they will cover the cleaning. ServiceMaster Clean ® of Upstate New York serves businesses and residents in Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, Warren, Washington, and upper Greene counties. They have been serving the Upstate New York area since 1985 with Disaster Restoration Services including fire, soot, odor, water damage and pack-outs. For more information, call 1-888-333-4488.