

#### **New Bathtub?**

I'm ready to redo my bathroom. I do not care for the fiberglass tub units and I'm looking at metal. Should the new tub be cast-iron or steel? Steel bathtubs cost about half of what cast-iron tubs cost, but what are the other pros and cons?

Ed Cunha, a plumber from Cape Cod, Mass., replies, "A steel tub is lighter and easier to maneuver. A cast-iron tub can weigh more than 300 pounds, making it difficult to get into place, especially if you are renovating a bathroom on the second floor.

A steel tub is louder than a cast-iron tub when being filled with water. This noise can be dulled somewhat with insulation around the tub. A mound of cement underneath a steel tub at final setting also will deaden sound.

A cast-iron tub keeps the bath water hot longer than a steel tub does. The enamel finish on a steel tub will chip more easily than that on a cast-iron tub. Any chipping eventually will result in rusting.

Other alternatives include fiberglass, which is comparable in cost to steel. Although it holds heat well and is lighter than cast iron or steel, a fiberglass tub can be loud during showers, and it stains more easily than other materials. Finally, Americast (American Standard; 800-442-1902; www.americanstandard.com) looks like cast iron but is about half the weight, and it holds heat well. The cost is about the same as cast iron, but because an Americast tub is easier to maneuver, the time and expense necessary to install it is less.

Although the installed cost of a cast-iron bathtub is likely to be greater than that of the alternatives, it would be the first choice in my own home. Cast-iron tubs have a long track record and should prove to be good investments."

Source: Fine Homebuilding, January 2004

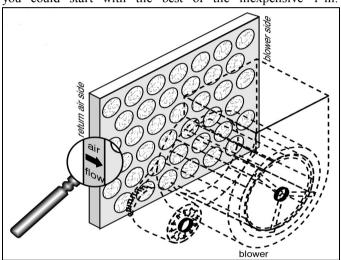
### **Changing Furnace Filters?**

Is fall the best time to change the filter on our forced-air furnace and which type of filter should I buy?

If you're thinking that you only have to change your filter once a year, you may well be shortening the life of your furnace. Actually, you should check your filter monthly and often change it monthly, depending on the type of filter you use. To determine if it's dirty, remove the filter and hold it up to the light. If you can no longer clearly see light, change the filter.

Many costly repairs can be avoided with regular filter changing. If you don't change the filter, lack of airflow through the furnace will cause it to overheat and shut down. Similarly, a dirty filter can cause an air conditioner to shut down because the coils freeze up when airflow is inadequate.

Filters are designed to protect the blower motor from dirt. When buying filters for this task, the glass fiber filter will do the job. But if you want to reduce airborne dust in your home, you could start with the best of the inexpensive 1-in.



disposable filters—the standard pleated filter (\$1.25 to \$2 each). Better yet, to remove even more small particles, install an inexpensive, electrostatically charged fiber filter (\$10). 3M Filtrete is one common brand (888-364-3577; www.3m.com). Just make sure to check the filter monthly and change it when it's dirty (not just every three months as recommended).

All other options, from a 4-inch thick mechanical air filter to an electronic filter plate system, involve electrical or ductwork changes by heating/cooling contractors. They remove more particles, last longer and cost more.

Finally, whatever filter you use, make sure you install it correctly, with the arrow on the filter edge pointing toward the blower motor. Putting it in backwards decreases the filter's efficiency.

Source: The Family Handyman, October 2003

### **Removing Wallpaper?**

I want to remove the wall paper in my living room. Can you give me some pointers?

Start by stripping the outer face off of the wallpaper. Sometimes this is a vinyl coating and other times it is just a dense layer of paper. This should leave only the backing material and glue. Prepare a wallpaper stripping solution consisting of water and a little dishwashing detergent. Wallpaper stripping solution should be sponged on the

backing material and allowed to soak (re-wetting as necessary) for at least 10 minutes. A cheap garden-type sprayer will tremendously speed up the soaking process. Attempt to remove the backing material with a wallpaper scraping tool or alternately any flat bladed tool, such as a wide putty knife. If this fails, re-wet the backing and allow to soak longer. The more you soak, the easier the job. If the above stripping solution is not working well enough, you may also try a solution of 2 parts water to 1 part white vinegar and



use the same technique. This stripping solution is only effective against wallpaper installed using wheat or starch based wallpaper adhesives. If the adhesive is unknown, use one of the below listed strippers.

If you have really wallpaper, stubborn obtain some Safe and Simple online or Dif from your local home

improvement store and follow the bottle's directions to remove the remaining backing material.

If you plan on painting the area you just stripped, you must ensure that all the glue behind the backing is removed. To tell if there is still glue remaining, wet the wall and feel it. Any slimy areas mean there is glue left over. To remove any remaining glue, mix 2 tablespoons of liquid fabric softener into a gallon of water and scrub. You must also carefully rinse the entire wall surface, so there are no traces of paste or wallpaper stripper remaining behind before you paint.

If your vinyl or dense paper facing does not want to peel off the backing, you may try to dry peel it off the wall which may or may not cause wall damage. You can also obtain a paper scoring tool, such as the Paper Tiger, to score the paper and perform the above steps for removal. Paper scoring tools can damage the drywall underneath the wallpaper but are gentler

on plaster walls. Be sure you read the directions on the package for complete instructions, but a good rule of thumb is to let the tool do the work. Additional lateral pressure will cause undo damage to the wall surface. An alternate method is to use a razor to score a series of X's into the wallpaper surface. This requires a careful touch as to not damage the underlying wall surface. In some cases, the scoring and soaking steps will promote or enhance the stripping of the facing material, so after this step, attempt to remove the facing material again. If still no success, you will have to perform repetitive score, soak, and strip steps to remove your wallpaper.

Source: www.wallpaperinstaller.com

If you have a question, change of address, comment, home tip or would like to send Home Tips to your clients, send your letter to Home Tips, Christian Building Inspectors, Inc., 3697 Habersham Lane, Duluth, Georgia, 30096-6111. You can also E-Mail your questions to us at rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com/.

## Quote Of The Month

" THERE ARE NO GAINS WITHOUT PAINS."

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

A Tip Of The Hat To:

### Young Sook Park

America's Realty, Inc. 595 East Crossville Road Roswell, Georgia 30075



Thank You

# CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC.

- Member: ASHI, GAHI, MAIA, ICC •
- ICC CODE CERTIFIED CABO ONE & Two Family Dwelling Inspector No. 1619
  - Fully Insured With E&O, Liability and Worker's Compensation Insurance •
- Office: 1-888-257-0365 or 770-849-0920, Fax 770-849-0540, Digital Pager 770-890-4503 •
- Web Page: www.christianbuildinginspectors.com Email: rodharrison@christianbuildinginspectors.com •



- Site
- Drainage
- Foundations
- Floor Slabs
- Crawl Spaces Electrical
- Basements
- Structural
- Interior
- Exterior
- Appliances
- Ventilation

Plumbing

Heating

- Radon
- - New Homes

• Attic

Roofing

- Warranty
- Construction

Air Conditioning