

The Healthy Home Report

Winter 2011



AtlasCare®

Pursuing perfect health for your home™

An Engineer's Opinion

Living in the country is in many ways very idyllic. On a warm summer's evening I can sit on my front porch and not see a light. The sound of frogs in the pond and birds in the trees is very soothing. There are some challenges, however.

The main one is water. When you live in the city you take a lot of things for granted. Water quality is a big one. I get my water from a well. Fortunately the Ontario Ministry of the Environment provides good guidelines along with a free water testing service to ensure that everyone has quality water. My home is next to a working farm. Concerns for me are things like fertilizers and organic matter in the water. I extended my well the recommended distance above grade to keep surface water out. I had to install an ultraviolet light to kill bacteria and install a reverse osmosis system for drinking water. I also had unacceptably high levels of iron in my water which required the installation of an iron filter. This is an important expense, one that I don't regret in the least. I don't take my drinking water for granted any more.

A few weeks ago I presented a cheque for \$1,000 to the Halton Women's Shelter through our Care to Share program. This is an

organization dedicated to serving the needs of women suffering from physical, mental and sexual abuse. In an average year they provide refuge to over 800 women and 1,000 children. I may live in a good community but that is only on the surface. There are many among us who do not share our good fortune.



Recessions have a way of taking us out of our complacency. We can't assume the air we breathe is good, the water we drink is clean and the community we live in is better than what we see and hear about in the media. We have to exercise independent judgment about the things that affect us and support the hard work of those who care for our communities. AtlasCare is proud to play a small role in pursuing health for your home and our community.

Roger Grochmal

Roger Grochmal P.Eng.
President and CBO, AtlasCare

A warranty is **not** a guarantee of service

Warranties are a key way furnace manufacturers and sellers differentiate their product from one another. Five-year, 10-year and even lifetime warranties are available on some products which is attractive to homeowners who want to limit their risk.

What becomes tricky is the fine print around the warranty. **Not every part of a furnace has the same warranty** and often what is promoted is the component with the longest one. Also, accessories, such as thermostats come with the furnace but are usually covered by a much shorter warranty. If you are unclear about your heating equipment, speak to us. We'd be happy to walk through your warranty details together.

A lot of companies that sell furnaces don't have much in the way of a service department. Some heating companies have as many as 2,000 customers per technician. At AtlasCare we have 200. When demand is highest in the dead of winter, **we don't just SAY we'll get there, we GET there** - on the same day. Some of our competitors make homeowners wait up to 10 days. **What good is a warranty if you can't get service?** Giving our customers peace-of-mind is one of the cornerstones of our business - that's the AtlasCare difference.

Regular maintenance that comes with our **Guaranteed Comfort Plans** minimizes the risk of emergency repairs. When you buy a furnace from AtlasCare, you can rest assured **we will get there when you need us regardless of what warranty you have**. That's peace-of-mind you can count on.

Resolution 2011

Refer a FRIEND

Our best customers come from satisfied customers. Call us with your referrals!
905-829-1296



At AtlasCare, providing exceptional customer service is paramount – we want to exceed your expectations every day and in every way. From the frontline staff and our customer care team, to the technicians who treat your home like their own, we work hard at earning your trust and providing the best possible experience from start to finish.

That's why this spring, we are implementing a new computer system that will help us be more efficient in our customer interactions. Many of our current systems will be integrated. Accessing service records and booking appointments will be faster, easier and more streamlined. The end result? A better experience for you. After all, we'll be spending less time on behind-the-scenes administration and more time focusing on the needs of our customers.

You will receive more information in the near future about the new system. Please don't hesitate to give us a call with questions. We appreciate your patience and cooperation!

For 24-hour emergency service call
905-829-1296

At Your Service

With Dick Thomas



Has your CO detector expired?

There is an abundance of information out there about the dangers of carbon monoxide and the importance of having a detector installed in your home – you’ve probably even heard it from AtlasCare a few times. What isn’t widely known is that CO detectors actually expire.

Part of the issue is that not all models indicate an expiration date on the detector itself, and to date, manufacturers aren’t required to do so. On average, a CO detector functions properly for approximately five years, unless the manufacturer

indicates otherwise. If you can’t remember when you purchased yours, it’s probably time to replace it. If you do know the date of purchase, why not write the expiry date (five years later) right onto the detector using a permanent marker?

The next time you see your Healthy Home Technician, ask him to check your CO detector to ensure it is functioning properly and hasn’t expired. And if you’re in the market for a new one, we can provide suggestions on what models fit the requirements of your home.

What’s your IAQ IQ?

It seems like as soon as I turn on my furnace, my nose gets stuffy and my skin dries out. What’s going on?

When it’s cold outside and your furnace is running, moisture gets sucked out of the air in your home. That’s why your skin feels dry and you may experience respiratory issues like bronchitis or sinusitis. Humidifiers are an excellent way to remedy the problem and restore moisture levels. The key is ensuring the proper balance – we recommend between 30 and 50% to keep your home comfortable and healthy. Anything higher can promote the growth of germs and mould.

I’m pretty good about changing my furnace filter frequently, but I still notice dust and spend most of the winter sneezing. What can I do?

First, ask your Clean Air Specialist to take a look at your filter – you may need to upgrade to something like a HEPA. A professional duct cleaning is another great way to remove any dirt, debris and allergens that might be lurking in your ducts and improve your overall indoor air quality. Keep in mind the sneezing could be caused by something else - we recommend an air quality test to rule out other potential dangers.

Do you have an indoor air quality question you’d like answered? Email it to us at info@atlascare.ca. If we use it in our next issue of *The Healthy Home Report*, you could win a free IAQ consultation from an AtlasCare Clean Air Specialist.



AtlasCare in the Community



Got coats? Donate them to our Comfort Drive!

The fourth annual **Comfort Drive** in support of **Out of the Cold** is underway! We have already made one delivery and we had enough gently-used, adult-sized winter coats and apparel to fill an entire car! Thank you to everyone who has donated so far. If you haven’t, and have items to contribute, donations can be dropped off at 2590 Bristol Circle, Unit 1, or given to your Healthy Home Technician during a service appointment.

We Care to Share

It’s been six months since we launched the AtlasCare Care to Share program and we’ve been incredibly pleased by the response! Over 1,200 nominations have been received and six incredible organizations have been chosen by random draw to receive a \$1,000 donation from AtlasCare. Congratulations to:

- All-A-Board Youth Ventures
- The Dam - Youth Drop-in Centre
- YMCA of Oakville
- Jewish Women International of Canada
- Toronto Intergenerational Partnerships
- Halton Women’s Place

If the charity you nominated hasn’t yet been chosen as part of our random draw, don’t give up - keep nominating them at www.atlascare.ca. And if the organization you chose DID get selected this time, feel free to nominate another not-for-profit close to your heart.

Caring for Kids

Again this year, we were proud to support the CP24/CHUM Christmas Wish Program.

AtlasCare employees organized their annual toy drive as part of the staff Christmas celebration. Christmas Wish has become one of the GTA’S largest distributors of toys to those in need during the holiday season and we are proud to take part.



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