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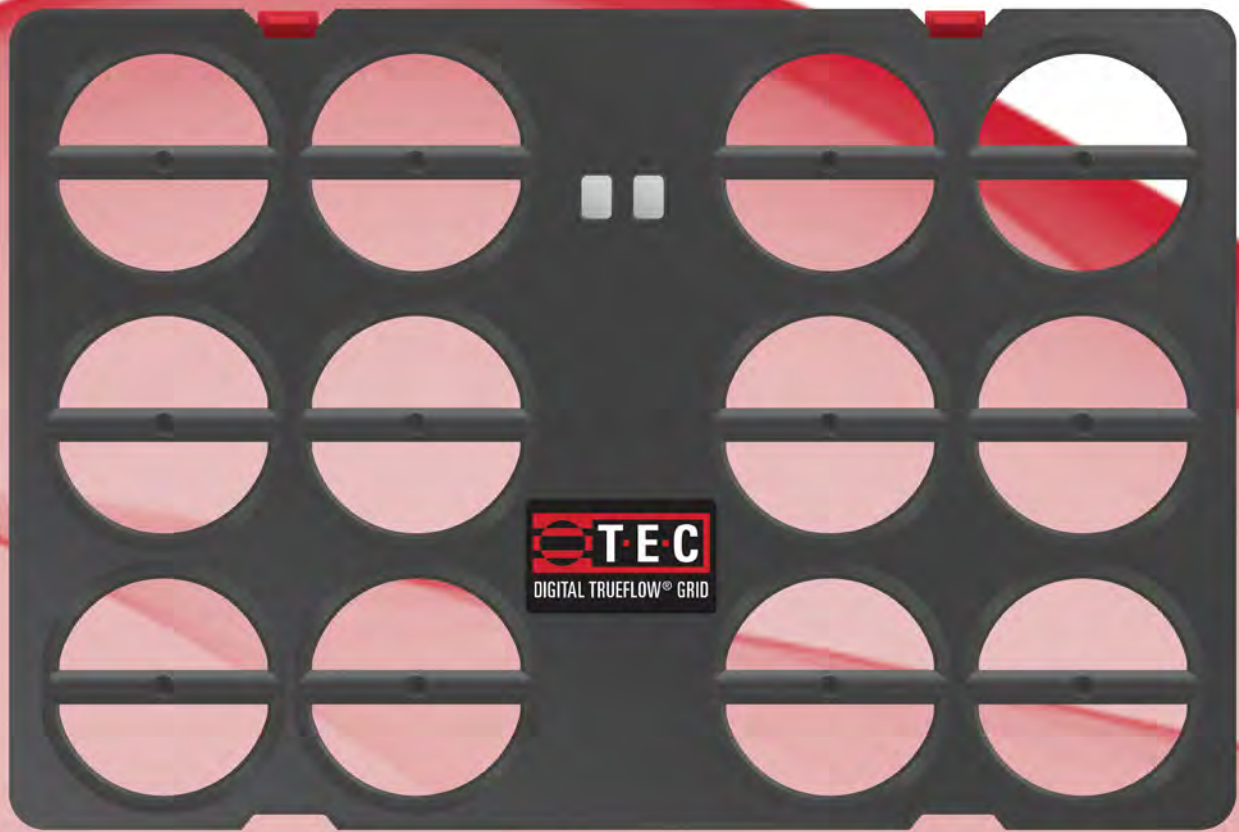
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Better Breathing: HVAC Contractors Redefine IAQ**
- **Summit 2025 Set the Stage for 2025 and Beyond**
- **Introducing the NCI Podcast Series**

**October is
NATIONAL IAQ
AWARENESS
Month!**



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TECHNICAL:

Improve IAQ With Air Upgrades

NCI's Adam Mufich provides insights on how great indoor air quality can be achieved using Air Upgrades.



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MANAGEMENT:

Breathing Better: Contractors Are Redefining IAQ

Five High-Performance HVAC™ contractors share their thoughts on the impact of IAQ on their companies and their customers.



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NCI SUMMIT 2025:

Navigating Performance: Setting the Stage for 2026 and Beyond

NCI's High-Performance HVAC™ Summit 2025 is in the books. It broke records and set the stage for a bright future.

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Clear Air, Safe Homes, and High-Performance HVAC™ Matter



Mike Weil is editor-in-chief and director of communications and publications at National Comfort Institute, Inc. Contact him at ncilink.com/ContactMe.

What we can't see indoors often hurts us the most. Poor indoor air quality, hidden carbon monoxide (CO), and underperforming HVAC systems are invisible threats that affect people every day. They're also why I believe Indoor Air Quality (IAQ), National Carbon Monoxide Month, and **National Comfort Institute's 2025 High-Performance Summit** all belong in the same conversation.

IAQ: MORE THAN FILTERS AND GADGETS

Americans spend nearly half of their lives indoors, yet the air inside can be worse than outside. Leaky ducts, pressure imbalances, and poor ventilation pull pollutants in and spread them around.

Too often, the fix is a gadget — an air cleaner or filter — instead of starting with and addressing the entire HVAC system. But IAQ improvement isn't about quick fixes. It's about testing airflow, sealing ducts, balancing systems, and then choosing technologies that solve the actual problems.

Contractors also need to be careful. Some IAQ devices create harmful byproducts. As an industry, our job is to deliver healthier air with confidence, and that starts with testing.

At Summit 2025, I had the opportunity to talk to five contractors about IAQ and their businesses. Read what they had to say on **page 12**.

CO: THE INVISIBLE KILLER

November is **Carbon Monoxide Awareness Month** and that is a reminder of just how high the stakes are.

We know how improper venting or blocked flues can quietly turn a home into a hazard. This is where contractors can truly save lives. Combustion testing, CO monitoring, and homeowner education aren't extras — they're essentials.

Protecting families from CO should be part of every service call. That's why I was so excited about this year's NCI High-Performance Summit, which took place September 9-12 in Austin, TX. Honestly, it's not just another event — it's an immersion into a culture of doing HVAC right: measuring, diagnosing, and delivering real results. Check out our Summit highlights on **page 16**.

The 2025 program included system performance, IAQ, electrification, sales, and maintenance strategies. Hands-on sessions and peer discussions gave contractors practical tools to prove their work with data.

NCI has always said that **"If you don't measure, you're guessing™!"** Each year Summit drives that point home and helps contractors turn measurement into a business advantage.


ONE COMMON THREAD

IAQ, CO safety, and High-Performance HVAC all connect through a single thread: protecting people with knowledge, testing, and discipline.

This fall, IAQ and CO awareness campaigns will get homeowners thinking. That's the perfect time for contractors to act — offering audits, safety checks, and performance testing that build trust and deliver results.

And for those ready to raise their game, think about adding more training for yourself and your team. That's how contractors and technicians sharpen skills, network with peers, and strengthen their ability to deliver what customers need most. In a world where air is invisible, what sets us apart is our ability to measure it, improve it, and make it safe to breathe.

With that in mind, mark your calendars for September 2026 when Summit will be held in Eastern U.S.

More information to come soon. 



PARTNER Highlights

Written by HVAC Professionals for HVAC Professionals

RectorSeal® Air Purifier

RectorSeal® showcased its **Dust Free Active Gold** air purifier at **National Comfort Institute's High-Performance HVAC Summit** in September. Contractor attendees witnessed how this device provides comprehensive indoor air quality (IAQ) solutions through advanced technology that combines carbon fiber ionizers, a germicidal UV lamp, and uses active photocatalysts.

Available in six and 12-inch units, it integrates seamlessly into new and retrofit residential and commercial HVAC systems with a discreet profile.

The carbon fiber ionizers produce zero ozone while helping reduce airborne dust particles. The UV-C spectrum germicidal light inactivates microbial activity in




HVAC systems. Built with corrosion-resistant materials for increased durability, the unit can withstand high humidity, salt, and temperature in HVAC environments.

Key Features & Benefits:

- Combines carbon fiber ionizers, UV-C light, and active photocatalysts for comprehensive IAQ solutions that enhance HVAC filter performance and inactivate harmful MS-2 bacteriophage virus.
- Engineered with corrosion-resistant materials. Reliable performance.

- Meets UL 2998 standards for zero ozone emissions. Is CARB-certified with FCC approval for safe IAQ improvement.
 - Features a twist-lock power cord for secure connections and a gasket-sealed mounting plate for easy installation in metal or fiberglass ductwork.
 - Includes a 24V auxiliary power port and 3000V surge protection with gentle lamp start while breaking down organic pollutants, reducing indoor odors, and improving allergy protection by reducing dust and pet dander.
- For more information, contact your local distributor, sales representative, or visit www.RectorSeal.com.

The Dust Free Active Gold Air Purifier was featured at booth # 9 at the NCI Summit. 

Combustion and CO Safety Training

Learn how to improve customer's system performance, prevent carbon monoxide (CO) hazards, and increase profitability



Get the technical knowledge you need to prevent CO hazards, improve system performance and increase profitability with NCI Combustion Performance & Carbon Monoxide Safety training.

Prevention is the key to avoiding Carbon Monoxide hazards in the home. Each year thousands of people in the United States become ill or die from CO poisoning. Without full combustion performance and CO safety training, there is no way of knowing whether a system is safe or efficient.

Not only will you be saving lives by becoming CO Certified, but you will be opening the door to new sales opportunities and greater profit.



Learn more and Register Today at ncilink.com/CO or call 800-633-7058

Improve Indoor Air Quality with Air Upgrades

It's no secret the vast majority of residential HVAC systems operate with high static pressure and low fan airflow. In June of 2018, the Department of Energy reviewed 44 independent studies on residential equipment airflow performance.

The study with the best results found 50% of systems tested moved less than 350 cfm per ton, while the study with the worst results found 93% of systems fell below that same threshold.

If these findings represent the average home, then most systems would benefit from contractors using the [Air Upgrade™](#) process to reduce total external static pressure (TESP) and increase fan airflow.

WHAT IS AN AIR UPGRADE?

An Air Upgrade is a set of prepackaged repairs designed so equipment can operate as the manufacturer intended. These repairs often include:

- Adding one large return in the home
- Increasing the size of one to three supply branch ducts
- Eliminating excess flexible duct and pinch points
- Enlarging the return plenum/drop
- Reducing filter pressure drop.

Most contractors use flat-rate pricing to sell an Air Upgrade either as a system repair or part of an installation package. While Air Upgrades are often sold as comfort or efficiency improvements, they also have a direct impact on **indoor air quality (IAQ)** and the broader **indoor air environment (IAE)**.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY VS INDOOR AIR ENVIRONMENT

IAQ is the condition of air inside a building as it relates to occupant health and safety. [ASHRAE Standard 62.1](#) defines acceptable IAQ as “*air in which there are no known contaminants at harmful concentrations as determined by cognizant authorities and with which a substantial majority (80% or more) of people exposed do not express dissatisfaction.*”

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has linked poor IAQ to symptoms such as eye, nose, and throat irritation, headaches, dizziness, and fatigue.

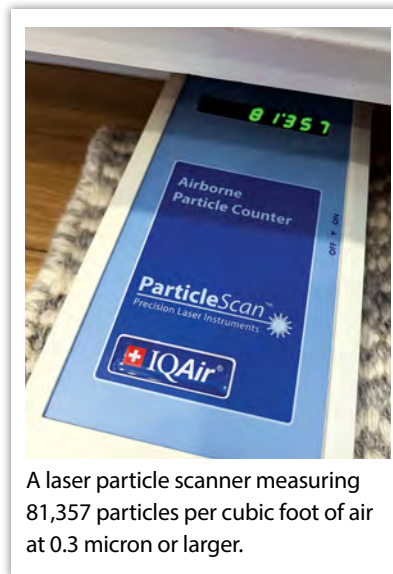
IAE is a broader term. It encompasses IAQ but also considers how the air feels in terms of comfort. Important factors include temperature, humidity, air movement, noise, and odors. IAQ is about health and safety, while IAE also includes comfort.

FILTRATION: THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

A common Air Upgrade includes filter improvements to reduce pressure drop. Doing so lowers total external static

pressure and improves fan airflow. Another benefit is air passes through a properly sized filter at a lower velocity and increases its effectiveness.

Designing the Air Upgrade with filter pressure drop in mind also allows contractors to specify filters with higher [Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values \(MERV\)](#) ratings without sacrificing system performance.



A laser particle scanner measuring 81,357 particles per cubic foot of air at 0.3 micron or larger.

More airflow through a filter means more air changes per hour and an increase in trapped particles. This increase improves overall IAQ, but only works if the filter is designed correctly.

Simply boosting fan airflow without addressing filter size will have the opposite effect as filter bypass and pressure drop both increase, which lowers IAQ. This problem often occurs when a system with a Permanent Split Capacitor (PSC) blower is replaced with a Constant Torque (X13) or Constant Airflow (ECM) blower without filter modifications.

Finally, lower velocity through filters and ducts has the additional benefit of reduced system noise, which directly improves the indoor air environment.

PROPER HUMIDITY = COMFORT AND SAFETY

Relative humidity is another important factor that ties airflow to IAQ. Excess humidity increases the risk of interior surface condensation, property damage, and microbial growth.

Once mold spores are airborne, they directly impact IAQ and the air we breathe.

Increasing fan airflow on an underperforming system increases the total and sensible capacity, but it also reduces the latent capacity. If the system is grossly oversized, higher airflow will reduce runtimes and cause a rise in average relative humidity during the cooling season. While this is not always common, it is important to understand the risk.

DUCT LEAKS: RETURNS PRESSURIZE AND SUPPLIES DEPRESSURIZE

Air Upgrades typically reduce system static pressure, which can also



A supply duct in an attic was taken apart to remove a pinch point in the flexible duct. Then the supply duct was sealed properly.

reduce duct leakage. Depending on duct location, this can also impact indoor humidity.

- **Return leakage** in attics or crawlspaces can draw in hot, humid, unconditioned air
- **Supply leakage** outside the living space, wastes expensive conditioned air, depressurizes the home, and increases infiltration.

HVAC-induced infiltration was first described by John Tooley and Neil Moyer in 1988. They gave it the acronym **MADAIR** (Mechanical Air Distribution and Interacting Relationships).

While reduced duct leakage can be a positive side effect of improving **Total External Static Pressure** (TESP), you should never rely on it. Instead, communicate excessive leakage with your customers and recommend duct sealing as a permanent solution.

RETURNS CIRCULATE MORE THAN AIR

Adding a return to a room without one can greatly improve comfort and balance room pressure. Rooms with supply ducts often suffer when the door to that room is closed. The door itself becomes an airflow damper and reduces delivered airflow.

Adding a return to a basement is an easy way to reduce return static pressure and increase fan airflow, but proceed with caution.

The return will draw in basement air which could have consequences that include:

- Backdrafting of natural draft gas appliances
- Efficiency losses from introducing colder basement air
- Increased stack or reverse stack effects

- Increased Radon throughout the home
- Spreading musty basement smells.

COMBUSTION/CO SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to have a basic understanding of carbon monoxide (CO) safety and building science when making changes to the **Combustion Appliance Zone (CAZ)**.

A basement can be substantially cooler than the rest of a home. A large return in a cold basement impacts the efficiency of an air conditioning system. Think of it like a bypass duct in a zoned system, adding cold air to the return will, at times, make the equipment operate outside of the manufacturer's specifications.

Changing the pressure of a basement can increase the home's infiltration and exacerbate the temperature difference between each floor of the house.

An example of this would be increased negative pressure in the basement during the heating season. When this occurs, cold air is drawn into the home through the lowest point. Increased infiltration also comes with an increase in airborne debris being introduced from the outdoors.

Radon is another hurdle that must be considered when installing a return in a basement. Radon is a radioactive gas that exists naturally in the soil and can enter the home through gaps and cracks in the foundation.

Changing the pressure in a basement can increase the amount of radon that enters a home. Adding a return can spread the Radon throughout the home, making a bad situation worse.

While most newer homes have clean



A system with a filter upgrade, showing a Dust Free Sixteen filter (MERV 16) installed.

basements, it is not uncommon for older basements to be damp and musty. A return can spread the basement smell throughout the rest of the home.

DELIVERED AIRFLOW AND MIXING

Increasing fan airflow has a direct impact on delivered airflow. If you increase one, then you increase the other. Increasing the delivered airflow improves air mixing within a home, while reducing areas of stagnant air.

This mixing improves overall comfort by promoting even air temperature throughout the living space.

By adequately mixing the air, there is a better chance that any airborne particles stay suspended until they reach the air filter.

Pay attention to your selection of grilles, registers, and diffusers (GRDs) when you attempt to improve air mixing. High-performance GRDs can improve the outcome.

AIR UPGRADES ARE MORE THAN COMFORT

An Air Upgrade is more than a duct repair package: it's a system approach to airflow, filtration, and distribution that directly impacts your customer's safety, health, comfort, and efficiency.

For example:

- Increased airflow improves particulate capture by improved mixing
- Better filtration captures more particles and helps improve fan airflow
- Relative humidity is important and can be impacted by changes to the system
- Duct leakage can have a dynamic effect on the IAQ and IAE
- Balanced room pressures can reduce infiltration/exfiltration and improve comfort.

When these elements are addressed together, Air Upgrades deliver not just efficiency but healthier, more comfortable homes.

As HVAC professionals, it's our job to measure, design, and install upgrades that balance airflow with safety, health, comfort, and system efficiency. We're not just moving air, we're changing the environment people live in and breathe in every day. **NCI**



Adam Mufich is an HVAC contractor who is now working as an instructor and curriculum developer for **National Comfort Institute (NCI)**. If you're an HVAC contractor or technician interested in learning more about Air

Upgrades and IAQ, contact Adam at ncilink.com/ContactMe. NCI's website www.nationalcomfortinstitute.com is full of free information to help you improve your professionalism and strengthen your company.



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HVAC Service *that Stands Out*

National Comfort Institute, Inc. (NCI) is proud to present **The High-Performance HVAC Podcast** series. The leaders in understanding airflow and how every building must be considered part of the system bring you these shows. Their mission: to spotlight the often-invisible issues faced by contractors and customers alike. Why? So you can ensure that your customers receive the most comfortable, safe, healthy, and energy efficient systems.

How? Industry experts, trainers, and influencers come together and share their experiences in the realm of testing, measuring, and diagnosing issues so they can offer customers the options that best fit their budgets and needs.

In the latest episode, **Contractor Jim Ball** explains strategies that can help make your service department profitable and superior to your competitors.

Check out this podcast today and discover how you can stand out: ncilink.com/ServicePodcast.

Catch These Episodes and More at hvactoday.com/podcast



Service That Stands Out

In this episode, Jim Ball shares practical strategies for making your service department not only stand out but thrive as a profitable part of your business. From setting your team apart in a crowded market to implementing systems that boost efficiency and customer satisfaction. Whether you're an owner, manager, or technician looking for fresh ideas, you'll leave with actionable insights you can start using right away.

Defining Clean Air with John Ellis

Adam Mufich, Casey Contreras, and John Ellis break down the often-overlooked side of indoor air quality—how some IAQ devices can actually create harmful byproducts in your home. They explore the pros and cons of different filtration types, when to use each, and why not all “clean air” products are created equal. If you care about what you're customers are breathing, this episode will help you make more thoughtful recommendations.

Below the Beep: The CO Danger You're Missing - NCI Hosts: Adam Mufich, Casey Contreras, and Mark Hunt

Beyond Proper Equipment Sizing and Selection - NCI Hosts: Adam Mufich, and David Richardson

Lessons Learned Field Testing ComfortMaxx - NCI Hosts: Adam Mufich, and David Richardson

NCI High-Performance HVAC Summit: Why it's Different - NCI Hosts: Dominick Guarino, and David Richardson

Transition to A2L and Beyond - NCI Host: Adam Mufich, and Craig Migliaccio, AC Service Tech, LLC

Training the Next Generation of HVAC Technicians - Recorded live at AHR Expo 2025 - Featuring NCI's Dominick Guarino, and Adam Mufich

HVAC Diagnostic Workflows and Training Paths - Recorded live at AHR Expo 2025 - Featuring NCI's Dominick Guarino, and Adam Mufich

Navigating High-Performance Heat Pump Retrofits - Recorded live at AHR 2025 - Featuring NCI's David Richardson

You Are the Brand - Recorded live at AHR Expo 2025 - Featuring NCI's Adam Mufich, Al D'Ambola, and Chuck Worley, Worley Home Services.

Listen or watch wherever you find your podcasts or visit HVACToday.com/Podcast

Breathing Better: Contractors Are Redefining IAQ

Indoor air quality (IAQ) is no longer a luxury — it's a necessity. At National Comfort Institute's High-Performance HVAC™ Summit 2025, I sat down with five standout HVAC professionals who are leading the charge in their markets in transforming how they think about the air inside customer homes.

Brian Wright of Crossway Mechanical, **John Whitehead** of Honest Heating and Cooling, **Jeremy Begley** of HVAC to Home Performance, **Alana Ward** of Baggett Heating and Cooling, and **Dennielle Hearn** of Hearn Plumbing and Heating shared their insights on what it means to deliver truly High-Performance HVAC and why Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is at the heart of it.

PERFORMANCE FIRST, PRODUCTS SECOND



Brian Wright,
Crossway
Mechanical

When I asked each contractor how they approach IAQ, the answer was unanimous: ductwork and system performance come first.

"If you put in a system, set it up right, seal it properly, and it passes performance testing, IAQ products work great," said Brian Wright. "But if the system isn't set

up well, the products get a bad reputation."

Ward was even more direct: "Selling IAQ products without fixing ductwork is like throwing a squirt gun on a house fire. It's water, but it's not gonna solve the problem."

Hearn added, "If you're not fixing the problem, you're put-



Alana Ward,
Baggett Heating
& Cooling

ting a band-aid on a bullet wound." Their team refuses to sell IAQ upgrades unless they address any foundational issues first.

Jeremy Begley, who bridges HVAC *and* building performance, reinforced this principle: "IAQ is already a part of HVAC — the 'V' stands for ventilation. It must be implemented just as carefully and just as controlled as everything else."



Jeremy Begley,
HVAC 2 Home
Performance

BUILDING A CULTURE AROUND IAQ

For Brian Wright, IAQ isn't a product — it's a mindset. He says that they began by testing static pressure with manometers.

"As we started testing, we learned. We built a culture around it."

That culture has transformed his business. "We're currently booked out for eight to 10 weeks. We try to make no more than two appointments a day. It's made a huge impact — it's changed our lives."

John Whitehead talks about IAQ from the perspective of safety. He says NCI training reshaped his company's safety culture.

"Before we started as NCI contractors, I thought I was a hero because of my troubleshooting abilities. What I realized is that troubleshooting didn't always solve issues that could impact customers' health and safety."

He says he now sees IAQ as part of a broader



John Whitehead,
Honest Heating
& Cooling



responsibility.

“Comfort comes second to safety,” he added. “And IAQ is part of that safety.”

Furthermore, Jeremy Begley says he doesn’t believe that IAQ is only a technical concern — it’s a business differentiator.

“When you’re doing HVAC right, IAQ becomes a natural part of the conversation. It’s not an upsell — it’s a necessity,” he explains.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF AIR QUALITY

Indoor Air Quality isn’t just about airflow — it’s about people. Wright works closely with clients in the mold community, many of whom are immuno-compromised.”

Begley adds, “HEPA filtration, clean air — it’s the lungs of the home. If we don’t take care of that, people can’t heal.”

He’s outfitted his teams with carbon monoxide (CO) monitors and deploys air scrubbers during installations.

“Masks and suits are hard to wear in hot attics, but scrubbers make a difference. They also protect the home. Those little things have made a big

difference, and people talk about it,” he continues.



Dennielle Hearn,
Hearn Plumbing &
Heating

He also says he sees IAQ as a bridge between HVAC and health. “We’re not just technicians — we’re stewards of indoor environments. That means understanding how airflow, filtration, and humidity affect

the people living in those homes.”

Alana Ward and Dennielle Hearn shared stories of clients who suffered for years with respiratory issues, only to find relief after a proper HVAC system overhaul.

For example, Ward explains that her company had a customer who’d been on oxygen for years.

“After we fixed the ductwork and added proper filtration, she called us crying. She said she could finally breathe again.”

TRAINING, TRUST, AND TRANSPARENCY

Training was a recurring theme in

every conversation. Whitehead’s team has adopted NCI certifications, encompassing combustion analysis and duct system upgrades. “I have two more technicians going to combustion training next month in Minnesota,” he said, visibly emotional. “Just thinking about all the lives that are in their hands this season and every season — it brings tears to my eyes.”

Begley emphasized the importance of collaboration. “Industry collaboration is what grows the industry. Even leaders with proprietary things to sell are opening up at least part of that to everyone, and that’s important.”

Ward and Hearn take a more cautious approach to IAQ product adoption, driven by transparency.

Alana Ward says, “Our territory manager used to bring us products and say, ‘You need to put this in every house.’ I told him, ‘Don’t bring this to me unless we’ve solved the airflow problem first.’”

Wright’s team has built trust by showing clients the data. “We use manometers, flow hoods, and CO monitors — not just to diagnose but to educate. When customers see the

numbers, they understand the value.”

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR IAQ

IAQ isn't just good for health — it's good for business. Wright shared that his company's focus on performance and IAQ has led to consistent growth. “We don't advertise. Our clients do it for us. When you help someone breathe better, they tell everyone.”

Whitehead echoed that sentiment. “We don't sell boxes, we sell solutions. And when you solve a problem that's been plaguing someone for years, they become your biggest advocate.”

Begley pointed out that IAQ can serve as a gateway to more comprehensive home performance work. “Once you start talking about air quality, you naturally start talking about insulation, air sealing, and ventilation. It opens the door to whole-home solutions.”

Dennielle Hearn says her company has found that IAQ conversations lead to long-term relationships. “We're not in this for one-time installs. We want to be the company people call when they're ready to make their home healthier, safer, and more efficient.”

LOOKING AHEAD: IAQ IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Each contractor I spoke with views IAQ as becoming increasingly central to their work. Wright believes it will be a major driver of business. “Ten

years ago, IAQ was something people dismissed. Now, with changes in construction and more awareness, people realize how important it is,” he says.

Hearn sees a future where IAQ is a natural extension of good design. “If we can spread our wings, put in equipment the way it should be, educate customers, check all the boxes, then indoor air quality will take care of itself.”

“Selling IAQ products without fixing ductwork is like throwing a squirt gun on a house fire.”
— Alana Ward

Ward added a note of caution: “Consumers are getting more savvy. They've tried simple fixes and realized they don't work. At the same time, our products keep getting more expensive while their budgets get smaller.”

Begley believes the next frontier is integration. “We need to stop treating IAQ as an add-on and start treating it as a design parameter. That means better coordination between HVAC, building science, and architecture.”

Whitehead sees IAQ as a moral imperative. “We have a responsibility to


protect people. That means doing the hard work — testing, training, and telling the truth.”

FINAL THOUGHTS: IAQ AS A MORAL IMPERATIVE

What struck me most in these interviews wasn't the technical expertise — it was the moral clarity. These contractors aren't selling air; they're selling integrity. They're building systems that heal, protect, and endure.

As Wright said, “Indoor air quality is critical. People spend eight to 10 hours a day at home, sometimes more. If we don't take care of that, people can't heal.”

And as Whitehead reminded me, “When you're doing good, it's like dropping a pebble in the ocean — the waves go forever.”

In the world of High-Performance HVAC, those waves are starting to ripple. And the air we breathe is getting better because of it. 



Mike Weil is the editor-in-chief of **High-Performance HVAC Today** magazine as well as the director of communications for **National Comfort Institute (NCI)**. He has been with NCI

since 2014 and is a former chief editor for *Contracting Business* magazine. For article writing opportunities, reach out to him at ncilink.com/ContactMe.

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Summit 2025 Sets the Stage for Next Year and Beyond

High-Performance HVAC™ contractors from across North America converged in Austin, TX, from September 9–12, 2025, for the **22nd Annual High-Performance HVAC™ Summit**, hosted by the National Comfort Institute (NCI). This year's theme, "*Navigating Your Way to High Performance*," set the tone for an event designed to guide contractors through today's industry challenges and toward greater success.



Contractors gathered in the Austin heat to enjoy cold beverages, tasty Texas fare, and great camaraderie.

For more than two decades, Summit has been the premier gathering place for like-minded professionals committed to raising the bar in HVAC system performance, customer service, and business growth. Each year builds on the last, and 2025 did not disappoint. Attendees shared fresh perspectives, actionable strategies, and experienced hands-on training opportunities that are immediately applicable in their businesses.

A COMPASS FOR SUCCESS

Summit isn't just about attending sessions — it's about charting a course toward measurable results. Workshops and general sessions focused on system performance testing, innovative sales strategies, leadership development, and the latest technologies shaping the HVAC landscape.

Speaking of leadership, the **Daikin-sponsored Welcome**

Event kicked Summit off with great food, live music, and a lot of camaraderie. The networking began right away setting the stage for the entire week.

One of the highlights was **PerformanceTown**, NCI's hands-on training environment, where participants tested and diagnosed real HVAC systems under the guidance of industry experts. This interactive approach allowed contractors to discover hidden defects and refine their diagnostic skills in real time.

This year, PerformanceTown was presented in two sessions: the first featured **Airflow Testing and Diagnostics**. In this session, NCI Instructor Andrew Smith demonstrated static pressure testing and airflow profiling using the latest instruments to accurately measure total airflow at the equipment and diagnose common issues.

Then, the second session focused on **Total System Performance**. NCI Instructor Jeff Sturgeon helped participants use the latest instruments and software to verify total system performance using NCI's **ComfortMaxx™** application on the **measureQuick®** platform.

The Summit compass for success continued with a keynote presentation by Contractor **Chuck Worley** of **Worley Home Services**, Yorktown, VA. His address on how to **Dominate**



Dominick Guarino, CEO and President of National Comfort Institute.

Your Market with Irresistible Branding was about how he created sustainable success through strategic brand differentiation, not just competitive pricing. Chuck, adorned in his well-known vibrant orange and green suit, told the audience that the key is to move beyond transactional relationships and cultivate a powerful brand identity that commands loyalty and allows you to define your true worth in the market.

Furthermore, Summit 2025 included two expert interactive panels that explored **how contractors can overcome HVAC system redesign challenges** and **why uniting HVAC and building science is essential** when considering the entire building as the system.

The **redesign panel**, facilitated by NCI's David Richardson, consisted of the following experts:

- Ed Janowiak, Manager, HVAC Design Education at ACCA
- Alex Meaney, President, Mean HVAC Consulting and Design
- Dawn Mroczek, General Manager, GV's Heating and Cooling
- Colin Walsh, VP of Sales, Conduit Tech
- Paul Wieboldt, President, Tradewinds Appropriate Technologies.

The **HVAC/Building Science panel**, facilitated by NCI's Ben Lipscomb, P.E., included the following:

- Mitch Bailey, President, Air Heroes
- Jeremy Begley, Partner, HVAC 2 Home Performance
- Ty Branaman, HVACR Educator & Content Creator
- Mike Cianfrocco, The HVAC Grapevine
- Dustin Cole, HVACR Journeyman, Chief Disruptor, Cole Air.

SHARING IDEAS, BUILDING COMMUNITY

The **Contractors-Only Idea Meeting** remains a Summit tradition. This year, contractors once again gathered to exchange innovative practices on lead generation and sales initiatives. Winning ideas are recognized by peers.

More than 40 contractors participated in this year's Idea Session and selected the following two winners and their ideas:

- **Will Horner of Canco Climate-Care** took first place in the Sales Ideas category.
- **Mitch Bailey of Air Heroes** took the first-place prize in the lead generation category.

Both idea winners took home cash prizes for their ideas.

Building community and sharing ideas was further enhanced throughout the Summit event by **podcasts and live streaming discussions with HVAC Industry Influencers**. For the second year in a row, Summit featured influencers as part of the program.

Contractors and Influencers who participated this year include:

- ◆ Leilani Orr and Ty Branaman from the GRIT Foundation
- ◆ Russ King from Kwik Model (Coded Energy)
- ◆ Jon Esquivel from Austin Star
- ◆ David Messner from NCOAA and Sensorcon
- ◆ Dawn Mroczek from GV's Heating and Cooling
- ◆ Alana Ward of Baggett Heating and Cooling
- ◆ Tonya Gaitz from Gaitz HVACR
- ◆ Anthony Woo from Climatisation ACG





Keynote Speaker Chuck Worley shares why your brand is so important in your marketplace.

◆ Brian Wright and Axel Romero from Crossway Mechanical.

Also, Eric Kaiser of the Building HVAC Science (BHS) Podcast and Bill Spohn of TrueTech Tools interviewed Wianston Chi from Noso Labs.

Note: BHS is provided as a service to the HVAC Industry by TruTech Tools.

Plus, Bryan Orr of HVAC School interviewed Chad Simpson from Simpson Salute.

And finally, HVAC Grapevine Podcaster Chris Hughes (The Energy Conservatory) and Michael Cianfrocco (Detective Air) interviewed David Coziahr from Coziahr Heating and Air Conditioning.

Meanwhile, **networking opportunities** extended throughout the event, from casual receptions to structured discussions. **The Partner Tradeshow** featured NCI partner manufacturers, distributors, and service providers, who exhibited the latest tools and technologies up close.

This year's sponsors and exhibitors included:

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 → TruTech Tools

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 → GRIT Foundation
 → Seitron Americas
 → TSI.

NEXT-LEVEL BREAKOUT SESSIONS

This year's breakouts, presented by both high-performance contractors and National Comfort Institute instructors, include the following:

Implement Static Pressure



David Richardson (left) leads a panel discussion on how to overcome HVAC system redesign challenges.

Testing on Every Service Call, presented by: Al D'Ambola, Customer Care Manager and Instructor, National Comfort Institute (NCI), Morristown, TN

Add Duct Renovations to Your Product Offerings, presented by Adam Mufich, Instructor and Curriculum Development, NCI, Morristown, TN

Foster a Culture of High-Performance Accountability, presented by Alana Ward, President, Baggett Heating & Cooling, Clarksville, TN

Demystifying the Top Combustion Safety Taboos, presented by David Richardson, VP of Training, NCI, Morristown, TN

The PATH to High-Performance HVAC™: A Step-by-Step Approach, presented by David Richardson, VP of Training, NCI, Morristown, TN

Generate Leads from Service and Maintenance Testing, presented by John Boylan, General Manager, Lakeside Service, Brighton, MI

Why and How to Sell High-Performance Maintenance Agreements, presented by Tom Hearn, General Manager, Hearn Plumbing, Heating & Air, Madison, OH

High Performance HVAC Sales – The Canco Way, presented by Will Horner, Sales Manager, Canco ClimateCare Heating and Air Conditioning, Newmarket, Ontario, Canada

Restoration or Renovation? Two Revolutionary Approaches to Duct System Performance, presented by Zach Ortwine, Owner, Southeast Clean Air Solutions LLC., Henrico, VA

How to Capitalize on the Electrification Movement, presented



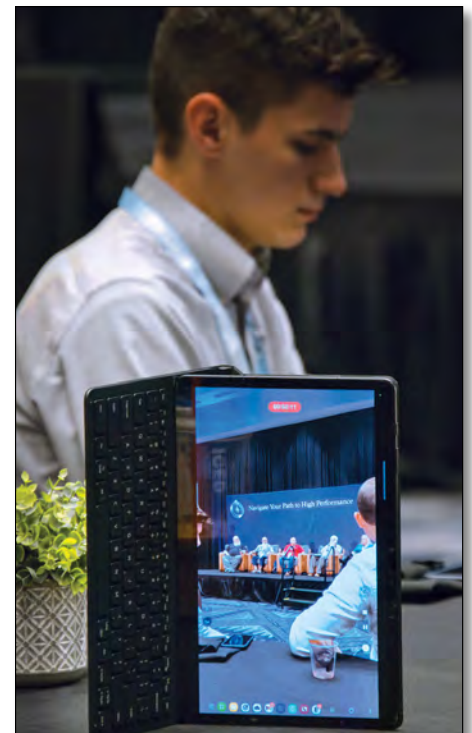
Ben Lipscomb, P.E. (left) and his panel of High-Performance HVAC™ contractors and educators discuss the importance of Home Performance with the attendees at the 2025 Summit.

by Mitch Bailey, Owner, Air Heroes, Modesto, CA

Making the Switch from Tradesman to Craftsman, presented by Paul Wieboldt, President, Tradewinds Appropriate Technologies, Waco, TX

Prove System Performance with Delivered Btu Testing, presented by Ben Lipscomb, P.E., Director of Utility Services and National Accounts, NCI; and Jeff Sturgeon, Senior Instructor and SoCal Training Manager, NCI

Good Design Isn't a Buffet: The Importance and Interconnection of Manuals J, S, and D, presented by Ed Janowiak, Manager of HVAC Design Education, ACCA; and Alex Meaney, President,



Mean HVAC Consulting and Design.

CELEBRATING HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADERS

The **Annual Awards Banquet** is always a highlight of Summit, honoring contractors and partners who exemplify excellence in technical skills, leadership, training, and customer service. NCI CEO **Dominick Guarino** calls the banquet “an opportunity to shine a bright light on the real heroes of this group – the contractors and partners whose dedication drives our entire industry forward.

“Your success is what really keeps us going,” Guarino told the record audience of more than 210 contractors, partners, and guests. “And we feel so blessed that you’ve chosen to become part of this caring group that continues to mentor each other and share what works for you selflessly.”

Guarino and NCI Vice President of Training **David Richardson** presented the awards to the following list of winners:

- **Small Contractor of the Year: Climatisation ACG**, Quebec, Canada
- **Medium Contractor of the Year: Baggett Heating and Cooling**, Clarksville, TN
- **Large Contractor of the Year: Simpson Salute Heating & Air**, Canton, OH
- **John Garofolo Implementation Excellence Award: Hearn Plumbing, Heating, and Air**, Madison, OH
- **Jim Davis Technical Excellence Award: Mitch Bailey of Air Heroes**, Modesto, CA
- **Rob Falke Servant Leadership Award: Bryan Orr of Kalos**

Services, Clermont, FL

- **Scott Johnson Training Excellence Award: Progressive Heating and Air Conditioning**, Newnan, GA
- **Spirit of Excellence Award: Jim Bergmann of measureQuick®**, Mogadore, OH
- **High Performance Sales Excellence: Darren McDonald of Progressive Heating and Air Conditioning**, Newnan, GA
- **Vendor Partner Award: Bill Spohn of TruTech Tools**, Mogadore, OH
- **NCI Chairman’s Award: Brian Wright of Crossway Mechanical**, Tomball, TX.

We go into more detail on the winners on our HVACToday.com website at ncilink.com/2025Winners.

LOOKING AHEAD

The High-Performance HVAC Summit continues to grow as both a learning event and a community celebration. With a new setting in Austin, a fresh theme, and the momentum of record-breaking participation, 2025 is one of the most impactful Summits yet.

As Guarino notes, “The Summit is more than just an event – it’s a roadmap for contractors to navigate their way to high performance. It’s about helping businesses thrive while delivering the comfort, safety, and efficiency that customers deserve.”

We encourage contractors, technicians, and industry partners to **mark your calendars for September, 2026**. More information, registration details, and pricing for the **High-Performance HVAC Summit 2026** will soon be posted at GoToSummit.com. 



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UPCOMING NCI TRAINING: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2025

PUBLIC LIVE TRAINING

Combustion Performance and Carbon Monoxide Safety

October 7-9: Lawnside, NJ
October 14-16: Glen Burnie, MD **SOLD OUT**
October 14-16: San Antonio, TX
October 14-16: Canton, OH
October 21-23: Johnstown, CO
November 4-6: White Plains, NY
November 11-13: Austin, TX
November 18-20: Lewisville, TX
November 18-20: Salt Lake City, UT
December 2-4: Centennial, CO
December 2-4: Somerville, MA
December 9-11: Carrollton, TX

Duct System Optimization and Residential Air Balancing

October 7-9: Green Valley, AZ **SOLD OUT**
October 21-23: Austin, TX
November 4-6: Kissimmee, FL
November 4-6: Carrollton, TX
November 11-13: Dayton, OH
November 11-13: Albuquerque, NM
December 9-11: Glen Burnie, MD
December 9-11: Tampa, FL
December 9-11: Mentor, OH
December 16-18: Lawnside, NJ
December 16-18: Phoenix, AZ

Commercial Air Balancing

October 14-16: Monroeville, PA
November 18-20: Oxnard, CA

PUBLIC LIVE TRAINING (cont.)

Residential HVAC System Performance and Air Balancing

October 21-23: Tampa, FL
November 4-6: Green Valley, AZ
December 2-4: San Antonio, TX
December 2-4: Flagstaff, AZ
December 9-11: Richmond, VA

PUBLIC ONLINE LIVE TRAINING

Airflow Testing & Diagnostics **ONLINE LIVE**

November 11-12

Commercial Air-Side Recertification **ONLINE LIVE**

December 16-17

*SCE SPONSORED LIVE TRAINING ncilink.com/SCESchedule

Combustion Performance and Carbon Monoxide Safety

October 7-9: Anaheim, CA **SOLD OUT**

Residential HVAC System Performance

October 14-15: Anaheim, CA
December 9-10: Tulare, CA

*SCE SPONSORED LIVE TRAINING (cont.)

High-Performance Heat Pump Retrofits

October 16: Anaheim, CA
December 11: Tulare, CA

Commercial Air Balancing

October 28-30: Anaheim, CA **SOLD OUT**

Hydronic Testing, Adjusting, and Balancing

November 4-5: Anaheim, CA

Airflow Testing & Diagnostics

November 18: Anaheim, CA

**TECH CLEAN CALIFORNIA ONLINE LIVE TRAINING ncilink.com/TECHCleanCA

High-Performance HVAC Design and Redesign for Electrification

October 21-23: Anaheim, CA

Residential HVAC System Performance

October 29-30: Stockton, CA

High-Performance Heat Pump Retrofits

October 31: Stockton, CA



*NCI training sponsored/subsidized by Southern California Edison (SCE) for qualified local contractors.

**NCI training sponsored by TECH Clean California for qualified local contractors.

Visit [NCIlink.com/ClassSchedule](https://ncilink.com/ClassSchedule) to view the latest schedule.



New NCI HQ and Training Center is Underway

A little over three months ago National Comfort Institute (NCI) broke ground on their new 10,000 sq.ft. headquarters and training center in Eastern Tennessee. The new center, planned for completion by the end of 2025, will house NCI staff and thousands of square feet of training space.

The training facility will feature a classroom that can accommodate 30-plus students, and a hands-on lab with numerous residential and light commercial HVAC systems — including heat pumps, furnaces, boilers, water heaters, packaged units, and hybrid equipment.

The building will also house a state-of-the-art live, online training studio as well as a full-featured podcasting/interview studio.

This single-level building features precast insulated concrete walls, and will be fully heated by 12,000-plus feet of in-floor radiant tubing courtesy of [REHAU North America](#). The tubing was snapped into [Crete-Heat insulated panels](#) which act as both insulation and a vapor barrier.

The system will be controlled by 10 strategically placed manifolds that handle a total of 34 hydronic heating loops (more to come on the system design and installation in future issues).

As of this printing, the entire facility, which will be fully foam insulated and

feature no unconditioned space, should be under roof. We're excited to provide updates as milestones of the construction project are completed. Stay tuned!

New Heat Pump Retrofit Class

There is no rest for the team from National Comfort Institute (NCI). Their newest class, *"The High-Performance Approach to Heat Pump Retrofits,"* is now available as an in-person training event being piloted in California.

This new class will help High-Performance HVAC contractors to identify and solve problems that compromise heat pump performance.

If you want to capitalize on the growing market for inverter-based heat pumps and the growing electrification movement, this class is for you. You'll learn to follow NCI's System Performance Evaluation™ process so you and your team can successfully assess, design, install, and commission high-performance heat pump retrofits, no matter the climate in your market area.

NCI's latest class is a one-day course is for HVAC technicians, company owners, managers, comfort advisors, system designers, installers, and commissioning techs.

The training also qualifies for recertification in one of the following NCI residential Air-side certifications

- Residential System Performance
- Duct System Optimization



- Residential Air Balancing
- Refrigerant-side Performance.

This heat pump retrofit class is available across the country. Plus an online version of the class will be available in January 2026.

Click here to learn more: ncilink.com/HPROnlineLive. Or you can call NCI's Customer Care line at **800/633-7058**.

You can see NCI's total utility partner training schedule so far here: ncilink.com/TrainingSched.


Did You Know ... NCI has Social Media Saavy

Most HVAC contractors do not know the breadth and width of National Comfort Institute's reach in the industry. The website recently underwent a redesign to showcase not only this magazine, but also NCI's reach into the podcast/live streaming arenas.

Contractors can enjoy two new [podcasts](#) each month with industry influencers and NCI trainers. You can listen to the leaders in understanding airflow — the secret sauce for your customers' health, safety, and energy efficient systems

You can also check out [livestreaming](#) events on the NCI YouTube channel.

In addition, the team at NCI is heavily involved in other social media platforms including [FaceBook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), and others. Be sure

to check in with any or all of these outlets for the latest content, information on training, and more. 





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Publisher
Dominick Guarino

Editor-in-Chief
Mike Weil

Art Director
Judy Marquardt

Online Development Director
Brian Roseman

Circulation Manager
Andrea Begany-Garsed

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Dominick Guarino
is publisher of
*High-Performance
HVAC Today* magazine
and CEO of National
Comfort Institute, Inc.
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[ncilink.com/
ContactMe](http://ncilink.com/ContactMe)

This past August, National Comfort Institute (NCI) Vice President David Richardson and I had the privilege of speaking at the [Carbon Monoxide Safety Summit](#), hosted by the NCOAA ([National Carbon Monoxide Awareness Association](#)).

Formed in 2015, this group's mission is to raise awareness and provide information about Carbon Monoxide (CO), its dangers, and how to prevent needless poisonings.

Members and partners include manufacturers of CO safety equipment, firefighters, emergency responders, the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA), Underwriter's Labs (UL), and many other concerned parties.

Unfortunately, the HVAC contracting community has been scarcely represented. We must change this, and have broader representation by our industry in this organization. After all, we are in more homes than any other group!

Besides raising consumer awareness, much of the conversation at the CO Summit was about emergency response. An important part of the discussions was low-level poisoning.

Emergency responders may never be called in when there are low levels of CO. Unfortunately, UL listed alarms only go off at very high levels. When emergency personnel are called, it's typically due to life threatening poisonings or worse. Symptoms of low-level exposure often go unrecognized until long-term damage is done.

Chronic low-level exposure can result in a number of symptoms and diseases. From Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), to multiple chemical sensitivity, to early Parkinsons and Alzheimer's, low level CO exposure can cause serious damage, especially to infants and the elderly.

Unfortunately, there is a misconception among emergency responders that **ALL** contractors know

how to respond to and diagnose the cause of a CO problem. In reality, less than 10% of HVAC technicians and plumbers have the training or test instruments to test and diagnose these issues.

There are approximately 400,000 technicians in the field. Less than 20,000 have the most basic training and knowledge to test, diagnose, and address the sources of CO problems!

As I began preparing for my talk about an HVAC contractor's role in CO response, I realized that well-trained HVAC professionals typically don't wait until there is a catastrophic poisoning.

They investigate and diagnose both potential and current causes of CO in homes and buildings every day. It dawned on me that their role is, and should be one of a *Pre-Responder* — so that it never happens in the first place.

Thus, a new term, **Pre-Responder** was born, and was presented for the first time at the 2025 CO Summit in Biloxi, Mississippi this fall.

WHAT DOES A PRE-RESPONDER DO?

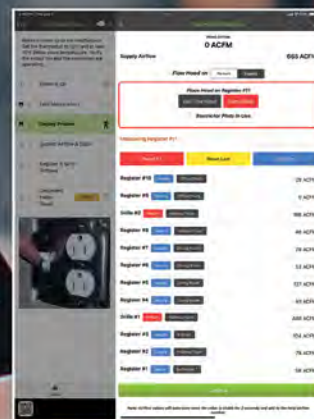
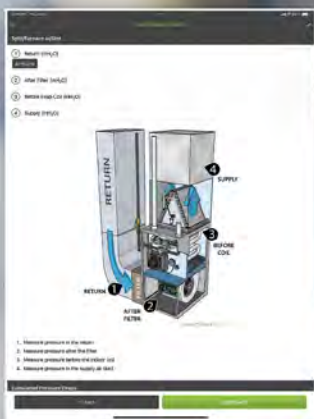
When your field people, including maintenance techs, service techs, installers, even salespeople, are in a home, they are the very first line of defense to help prevent CO poisoning.

There is one catch: to become a Pre-Responder you need the training, certifications, and tools to fully identify potential causes of CO in a building before they ever happen.

November is National CO Awareness Month. If you haven't done it yet, now is the perfect time to get the training and tools to make your field people CO Pre-Responders.

This fall make sure that when your techs are in homes and buildings they can help prevent occupants from getting sick, and likely save lives.

You can be part of the solution — become a Pre-Responder today! 



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