



**Ken
Field**

*Owner of Slate
Belt Energy
Services*

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Irritation

I think I've mentioned this before but one thing that really irritates me is when a service person uses bad information to help a homeowner draw a conclusion that is flawed. We are in the midst of a refrigerant changeover and have been for probably 10 years. I was irritated when contractors refused to use the new equipment back then and continued to send people down a dead end road. The homeowners had no idea but everyone in the industry did. Even if prices were less, it was inevitable that the equipment would not be serviceable long before it was worn out. Here we are and now the same companies are telling customers that the parts and refrigerant are not available and they need to replace everything again. That makes me furious. It is a sales based condemnation of an appliance that can still be used. We repaired another one this week as the third company who assessed the problem and we were the only one who actually made an attempt to repair it. The system is about 12 years old and should be usable for another 7 to 10 years based on average lifespan. It took me 3 days to get the part and the repair was 8% of the cost of a replacement system. I'm sure stories are told every day to people who have no way to verify them. If you can't trust the people working in your house, you have a bad working relationship. A second opinion is never a bad thing and lately a third one is a good idea.

You have to ask questions though to expose the partially true statements. R22 refrigerant will definitely be obsolete in a few years and it is extremely expensive now. However, there are replacements that can be used to refill a system after a major part is replaced. Some repairs are definitely not worth doing to an older system but most are a good value on a 10 year old system. If someone says I can't get the part you need, maybe someone else can. I have relationships with suppliers and distributors I have been developing for over 30 years and when I call, they can usually help me locate what I need. I'm not sure how other companies source parts but I'm like a dog on a scent. I won't quit until I know there is just nothing available. I even have a contact for someone who buys out wholesalers when they close and this woman has tons of parts that are no longer available from any other source.

Make sure you're getting accurate information before you replace a whole system. Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com.

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