

When the wind cuts across the Thames River and the lake effect drifts in from Huron, a quiet house in London can go from cozy to bitter in an hour. I have walked into homes where the thermostat read 13 C on a February evening, the family huddled around an electric space heater, and the furnace sitting silent with a blinking diagnostic light. In our region, emergency service is not a luxury. It is the line between a minor inconvenience and frozen pipes, water damage, and real safety risks.



Reliable emergency response does not happen by accident. It comes from a practical understanding of how equipment fails, what you can safely do as a homeowner, and how a trained technician will triage, diagnose, and correct a fault under pressure. It also ties into steady prevention, from proper furnace installation to seasonal maintenance. I will draw on local conditions and years of service calls across London to help you make clear decisions when heat fails at the worst moment.

What “emergency” really means in London’s climate

In our area, a healthy, insulated home can usually coast for four to eight hours without heat before interior temperatures dip into unsafe territory. That window shrinks in an older house with leaky windows, missing weatherstripping, and an uninsulated basement. When the overnight low hits minus 15 C, a split pipe can happen in as little as twelve hours if plumbing runs through an outside wall.

I have seen more emergencies triggered by a sequence of small issues than by one dramatic failure. A dirty flame sensor causes intermittent lockouts that no one addresses, the inducer motor starts to whine but keeps running, then the coldest night arrives and the safety controls shut everything down for real. Emergency work is often the endpoint of neglected maintenance, but it can also follow a power surge, a failed igniter, or a supply chain hiccup where a filter was left months beyond its rating. The first priority is stabilizing the home and ensuring safety, then getting the unit back online correctly, not just temporarily.

Safety first before you call

There are a few actions that reduce risk without putting you in harm’s way. Sticking to these steps can also save time on the phone and shorten the diagnostic process.

- Check that the thermostat is set to Heat, the temperature is above room reading, and the fan is on Auto. Replace thermostat batteries if they are more than a year old.
- Look at the furnace power switch, usually a light switch on or near the unit, and confirm it is on. Check your electrical panel for a tripped breaker, reset once only.
- Inspect the furnace filter. If it is visibly clogged, remove it, run the system for a short period without a filter, and replace with the correct size as soon as possible.
- If you have a high efficiency unit with white PVC vent and intake pipes exiting a side wall, go outside and clear away snow and ice. A blocked vent will cause a safety shutdown.
- If you smell natural gas or your CO alarm is sounding, leave the house immediately and call Enbridge Gas or 911 from a safe location. Do not try to restart the furnace.

These steps address the most common non-technical culprits I find on emergency calls. I once restored heat for a family in Old South by brushing snow off an intake pipe and replacing a three dollar thermostat battery. Not every night ends so easily, but it pays to check.

What a trained technician does in the first 20 minutes

On a true emergency call, the goal is to get the system to operate safely as quickly as possible, then decide if a permanent part replacement is needed now or first thing in the **heating and cooling london ontario** morning. The first minutes look the same across most modern gas furnaces:

- Verify gas supply and electrical power, then read any diagnostic codes on the control board.
- Inspect the flame sensor, igniter, pressure switch tubing, and drain lines if it is a condensing model.
- Measure static pressure and confirm the blower and inducer are moving the right air volume.
- Confirm that venting is clear, condensate is draining, and there are no signs of heat exchanger damage.

- Test combustion and draft where applicable, then cycle the furnace through at least one full call for heat.

None of this is guesswork. Ontario requires gas technicians to hold a G2 or G1 license through the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. Anything involving gas piping or combustion analysis belongs in licensed hands. The best emergency techs carry common failure parts on the truck for the major brands sold in the city, which keeps you from waiting days in a cold home.

The usual suspects that fail on a cold night

Some parts fail in July, but most wait until January. Cold, longer runtime, and power fluctuations stress every weak link. The patterns are predictable:

Igniters. Hot surface igniters wear out like a lightbulb, often between year 7 and year 12. You will sometimes hear the inducer start, then nothing, and then the system shuts down. A new igniter, properly matched and installed without oil from fingers, usually restores heat.

Flame sensors. A thin film of oxide builds on the rod and prevents the control board from "seeing" flame. The furnace lights for a few seconds, then shuts off and retries. A careful cleaning with an abrasive pad and re-seating the ground often fixes this. If corrosion is advanced, replacement is quick and inexpensive.

Pressure switches and hoses. A blocked condensate drain, ice at the intake, or a brittle hose will stop a pressure switch from closing. The furnace never proceeds to ignition. Clearing water from the trap, thawing the intake, or replacing a cracked hose is part of many midnight calls.

Blower motors and capacitors. A weak capacitor or ECM module failure shows up as little to no airflow, short cycling due to overheating, or a humming motor that will not start. On single stage PSC motors, a new capacitor is a common save. ECM replacements depend on the model and availability.

Limit switches and rollout sensors. These safety devices open when temperatures are out of range or there is a venting problem. A tripped limit needs a cause, not just a reset. Dirty filters, closed registers, and undersized ductwork are frequent culprits.

Thermostats and wiring. Wrong anticipator settings on older stats, dead batteries, or a broken common wire can mimic equipment failure. I have fixed more than one "bad furnace" by repairing a nicked thermostat cable in a basement ceiling.

When repair is smart and when replacement makes sense

The fast answer is not always the right one. I try to talk homeowners through three things: the age of the furnace, the specific failure, and the total cost of ownership over the next five winters.

If your unit is under 10 years old and the issue is an igniter, sensor, or capacitor, repair is the clear choice. Parts costs are modest, and downtime is short. If the furnace is 15 to 20 years old and you are facing an expensive blower or control board, you are putting money into a system that may have a limited runway. You can still repair to restore heat, then plan a thoughtful furnace installation in the shoulder season when pricing is better and you have time to weigh options.

I remember a home in Westmount with a 19 year old mid efficiency furnace. The inducer failed on a subzero night. We sourced an OEM part and got the system running, but I advised budgeting for replacement by spring. Two months later, the heat exchanger failed a combustion test. They were able to schedule a new high efficiency model without the pressure of no heat, and they saved a few hundred dollars by avoiding emergency installation pricing.

Costs and timing, without sugar coating

Emergency service in London typically carries a diagnostic fee higher than daytime calls, often in the 120 to 180 dollar range after hours. Simple fixes like a flame sensor cleaning or a new igniter commonly land in the 150 to 350 dollar bracket including labor, depending on access and equipment. ECM blower modules and proprietary control boards can push repairs into the 600 to 1,200 dollar range, sometimes more for less common brands.

After midnight, part availability can dictate the plan. Many local suppliers will not open until morning. A good heating and cooling London Ontario contractor stocks a bin of common parts by brand, but no one has everything. When a special component is required, we stabilize the home with safe space heaters, advise on water shutoff if pipe freeze is a risk, and return the moment parts arrive.



For full replacement, a standard furnace installation ranges broadly based on efficiency, staging, and any duct or venting changes. In our market, a straightforward 96 percent two stage gas furnace with proper venting and a new thermostat can land between 4,500 and 7,000 dollars installed. If zoning, humidification, or significant ductwork upgrades are needed, budget more. Emergency installations add logistical cost, but many firms will provide a temporary heat solution and schedule next day installation to keep pricing reasonable.

Why the right installation determines tomorrow's emergency

Half of the emergency calls I see can be traced back to air movement problems. Undersized return air, too many closed registers, or a mismatched blower curve make a furnace run hot and short cycle. That stress shows up years later as a cracked heat exchanger or repeated limit trips.

Good furnace installation is not just about sliding in a new box. It involves static pressure measurement before and after, attention to filter rack sizing, correct vent lengths and slope for condensing units, and combustion testing. If you are choosing among contractors for furnace installation London Ontario wide, ask them what they measure, not just what they sell. A team that sets the blower to the actual duct system instead of the default factory speed is the team that will not be back at 2 a.m. For a limit switch nightmare.

The carbon monoxide conversation

Carbon monoxide risk rises when venting is compromised or when heat exchangers crack. It does not take much snow drift to block a sidewall vent. Every home with a fuel burning appliance in Ontario must have working CO alarms outside sleeping areas. Replace alarms every seven to ten years, check batteries, and test regularly. If your alarm sounds and the furnace is running, do not open windows and wait it out. Leave, call for help, and let a licensed tech evaluate the equipment. I have had two calls in the last five years where a CO alarm and a vigilant homeowner prevented a bad night from turning worse.

What brands look like in the real world

You will hear many opinions about brands. In practice, reliability correlates less with the nameplate and more with the installer's care and the match of components. Some lines use universal parts that are easy to source at 9 p.m. On a Sunday, others rely on proprietary boards. High efficiency furnaces from the major manufacturers generally offer similar core performance. The advantage comes from a contractor who stocks your brand's common failure items and can flash a control board firmware if needed. When you are comparing quotes, ask what parts they carry on the truck for that model. Your future self will thank you.

Maintenance that pays for itself, quietly

A precision tune up every fall is not glamorous, but it is cheaper than one emergency call and much cheaper than two. A proper service visit is more than a vacuum and a filter. Expect the technician to measure temperature rise, check gas pressure, clean burners, inspect the flame signal, flush the condensate trap, and calibrate the thermostat. If your home uses a high MERV media filter or an ERV, verifying airflow is essential. I have measured static pressures in the 0.9 inch water column range on homes that should run around 0.5. That extra strain eats motors for breakfast.

Replace standard one inch filters every one to two months in winter, more often if you have pets or ongoing construction dust. High capacity four or five inch media filters usually go six to twelve months, but check monthly in the first season until you learn your home's pattern. Keep the area around the furnace clear for at least two feet on all sides. Boxes piled against a return drop can make the difference between a steady flame and an angry limit switch.

Signs your furnace is asking for help

Not every symptom warrants a 1 a.m. Call. Some are early warnings that you can address during business hours, before they evolve into emergencies.

- Repeated resets at the thermostat to get heat going, especially on windy nights.
- A furnace that runs for a minute or two, shuts off, then restarts several times in a row.
- A rising utility bill with no change in setpoint or weather, which hints at poor combustion or airflow.
- Odd smells on startup that last more than a few minutes after the first fall run, especially metallic or sharp odors.
- Rattles or droning from the blower compartment that were not there last season.

Catching issues at this stage can keep you out of the emergency queue in January. Mention patterns when you call. A note like "shuts off after 10 seconds, restarts three times" narrows the field quickly.

How to choose a service partner when you are cold

You will not enjoy shopping around while wearing a toque in your living room, but spend five minutes asking the right questions and you can avoid frustration.

Ask whether the company provides true 24 hour service with licensed techs, not just an answering service. Confirm they handle your brand. Ask what their after hours diagnostic fee covers and whether trucks carry common parts. If your equipment is under manufacturer warranty, ask how they handle warranty verification at night. Some firms will proceed and true up with the manufacturer in the morning, others will wait. There is no wrong answer, but you deserve clarity.

Local presence matters. The best providers of furnace repair London Ontario residents rely [residential heating and cooling London](#) on know the neighborhood's housing stock. They know which subdivisions have tight mechanical rooms, which century homes hide knob and tube around the furnace, and which builders used restrictive return grilles. That small context speeds work and avoids mistakes.

The repair visit, demystified

Expect a clear explanation of findings and options. If the tech proposes a part, ask to see the failed component and the meter readings. A good pro will show you a weak microfarad reading on a capacitor or a poor flame signal in microamps. If a repair will only buy time on a very old unit, you should hear that plainly, along with a plan to keep your home safe and warm until you decide on replacement.

Keep your paperwork. Documented maintenance helps with manufacturer goodwill on borderline warranty questions and helps the next tech avoid retracing steps. If you decide to replace, those records guide a better furnace installation that addresses the root cause, not just the symptom.

Tying it together with broader home comfort

A furnace does not live alone. The best heating and cooling London Ontario contractors look at the system as a whole. Sealing duct leaks in a basement can raise delivered heat by 10 to 20 percent. Balancing airflow to cold bedrooms, addressing a damp crawlspace, or adding modest attic insulation can reduce runtime across the board. That is less wear, a quieter house, and a lower chance of a 3 a.m. Shutdown.

If you have a heat pump paired with a gas furnace in a dual fuel setup, coordination matters. I have seen heat pumps locked out too early or allowed to run too low, both of which stress the system. A thoughtful control strategy reduces switchover chatter and saves money.

When you should think ahead to replacement

If your furnace is older than 15 years and has needed two or more significant repairs in the last three winters, start planning. Do not wait for a holiday weekend failure. Get a load calculation done, not just a look at your existing size. London homes vary widely, from modest bungalows to sprawling two story builds with open stairwells that act like chimneys. Label your dampers, ask for a commissioning report, and insist that the installing contractor measures and records static pressure on every speed tap. These are small, unglamorous details that separate a smooth first winter from a string of callbacks.

When the time comes, vet your options for furnace installation London Ontario wide with a few pointed questions. What is the total installed price, all permits and venting included. What parts are stocked locally for this model. What is the warranty on the heat exchanger and on labor. Will you receive a start up sheet with gas pressure, temperature rise, and static pressure. If the salesperson stares blankly at that last question, keep looking.

A short, real example from a harsh night

A call came in from a family near Masonville at 10:47 p.m., windchill around minus 20 C. No heat, furnace cycling, carbon monoxide alarms quiet, small kids in the house. Over the phone we verified the thermostat setting, cleared a filter that was buckled from suction, and checked the exterior intake for snow. No luck. I arrived about 45 minutes later. Diagnostic code showed pressure switch open. The condensate trap had gelled sludge from a summer of neglect. We flushed the trap, cleared a sagging drain hose that held water, and confirmed proper slope on the vent. The furnace lit, but the flame signal was marginal, around 1.2 microamps. A light cleaning brought it to 3.5 microamps, right in range. I let the system run through two full cycles, measured temperature rise, and we set a reminder for a full maintenance visit in the morning. The family slept warm. The total bill, even after hours, was less than the cost of a frozen pipe repair.

That is what competence looks like on an emergency call. It is not magic, just method.

Your next right step

If your furnace is down now and you are reading with a blanket over your shoulders, work the short safety list above and call a reputable provider of furnace repair London Ontario residents trust. Mention what you have already checked. Make the basement accessible, and if you have pets, secure them. If you are stable and planning ahead, schedule maintenance, replace a neglected filter, and walk around the house to check every supply and return grille for blockages.

Reliable heat in a London winter depends on a chain of small, correct choices. Careful furnace installation, steady maintenance, and a 24 hour lifeline when the unexpected happens are the pillars. With the right partner and a bit of homeowner vigilance, you can keep emergencies rare, short, and far less stressful.

Hometown Heating and Cooling — Business Info (NAP)

Name: Hometown Heating and Cooling

Website: <https://www.hometownhc.ca/>

Email: sales@hometownhc.ca

Phone: (519) 425-0555

Service Area: London, Woodstock, and Ingersoll (Southwestern Ontario)

Ingersoll Location

Address: 113 Mutual St N, Ingersoll, ON N5C 1Z8

Map/listing URL:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hometown+Heating+and+Cooling/@43.042608,-80.8860254,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x882e9bfee0d53bf380.8834505!16s%2Fg%2F1tdgqgkq>

Embed iframe:

London Location

Address: 45 Pacific Ct Unit #11, London, ON N5V 3N4

Map/listing URL:

https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hometown+Heating+and+Cooling/@43.0088901,-81.1800363,17z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x882c1f2183b77adf:0x7511c81.1752898!16s%2Fg%2F11fsm535_n

Embed iframe:

Hours:

Monday-Friday: 8:00AM-5:00PM

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

Open-location code (Plus Code): 2R6F+3V London, Ontario

Socials (canonical https URLs):

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Hometownhandc>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/hometownhandc/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/hometownhc/>

<https://www.hometownhc.ca/>

Hometown Heating and Cooling provides residential HVAC services across London, Woodstock, and Ingersoll in

Southwestern Ontario.

Services include heating and cooling installation and repair, fireplace services, duct cleaning, ductless mini-splits, and gas line work (service scope varies by job).

The Ingersoll location is listed at 113 Mutual St N, Ingersoll, ON N5C 1Z8.

The London location is listed at 45 Pacific Ct Unit #11, London, ON N5V 3N4.

To contact Hometown Heating and Cooling, call (519) 425-0555 or email sales@hometownhc.ca.

For directions, use the listings:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hometown+Heating+and+Cooling/@43.042608,-80.8860254,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x882e9bfee0d53bf380.8834505!16s%2Fg%2F1tdgqgkq> and
https://www.google.com/maps/place/Hometown+Heating+and+Cooling/@43.0088901,-81.1800363,17z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x882c1f2183b77adf:0x7511081.1752898!16s%2Fg%2F11fsm535_n

Popular Questions About Hometown Heating and Cooling

What areas does Hometown Heating and Cooling serve?

Hometown Heating and Cooling serves Southwestern Ontario, including London, Woodstock, and Ingersoll.

What services does Hometown Heating and Cooling provide?

Services listed include heating and air conditioning work, fireplaces, duct cleaning, ductless mini-splits, and gas line services (availability varies).

Where are Hometown Heating and Cooling locations?

Ingersoll: 113 Mutual St N, Ingersoll, ON N5C 1Z8.

London: 45 Pacific Ct Unit #11, London, ON N5V 3N4.

Do they offer emergency service?

The website indicates 24/7 emergency service for urgent HVAC situations.

How can I contact Hometown Heating and Cooling?

Phone: [+1-519-425-0555](tel:+15194250555)

Email: sales@hometownhc.ca

Website: <https://www.hometownhc.ca/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Hometownhandc>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/hometownhandc/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/hometownhc/>

Landmarks Near London, Woodstock, and Ingersoll

- 1) [Victoria Park \(London\)](#)
- 2) [Fanshawe College \(London\)](#)
- 3) [Pittock Conservation Area \(Woodstock\)](#)
- 4) [Woodstock Art Gallery](#)
- 5) [Ingersoll Cheese & Agricultural Museum](#)
- 6) [Harris Park \(London\)](#)