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Annual electrical inspections: What are they and why are they important?

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Gamble Wiseman

I sat down with one of our master electrician this week, Will Hightower, to go over annual electrical system inspections. Will has been in the business for decades. There aren't many people who can impress me with their breadth of knowledge on any topic, but he does with how well he understands electrical work. I don't know about you, but I have no idea why annual inspections would be necessary. Aren't electrical systems installed and left alone? Why would they need to be inspected at all, let alone once a year? According to Will, "you want to make sure they are working efficiently. When your systems go down, you pay for emergency service, potentially a more comprehensive repair, and the business may have to shut down for a certain period of time. Losing electricity costs you money and sometimes a lot of it. You always want to be aware of how your equipment is working, which will save you money over time." What about safety? "Safety is a key piece to it. If the people working in the facility don't know how the electrical systems work, and one component is about to short out and they're not aware of it, that can put them in a place of danger, and you don't want that. You want safety at all costs."

One thing in particular is keeping the electric systems clear of debris. Mechanical and electrical rooms are not storage closets. If the transformers or panels are suffocated by the things stored around them, they will overheat, potentially go down and need to be repaired, or cause a fire in the worst case. All of these are costly, and potentially devastating, especially commercially.

The type of building is irrelevant, they all need to be safe. The best way to do that is have a qualified electrician, like Will, and ensure these systems are working the way they should. Doing this at least once a year will save you time, money, and headaches. This is why all of our HVAC PM contracts include an annual electrical inspection at no additional cost to the customer. The electrical systems directly impact the equipment, and it's our job to keep it running safely and efficiently.

Are you keeping up on your inspections? Ask your contractor about them. Better yet, ask us!

Gamble Wiseman handles commercial maintenance at Cotti-Johnson HVAC, Inc., Taunton, Mass.

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