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## **Scammers Exposed**

The National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) participated in an undercover investigation by Chris Hansen and *Dateline NBC* to expose companies that use bait and switch tactics to take advantage of consumers. The investigation culminated in a segment that aired January 30, 2011, featuring NADCA President Buck Sheppard as the industry expert. After witnessing one of the scam operators in action, Sheppard was taken aback. "It was amazing how unscrupulous some people can actually be," he noted.

The segment focused in part on a representative from a company called Duct Masters, out of Hebron, Kentucky. The consumer called the company expecting the advertised price of \$49.95, but instead ended up paying almost \$500. Even after paying the higher price, the job was not done properly. Dust and chemicals were released into the living space of the home and the system was still filthy after the Duct Master representatives were finished.

Reflecting on the segment that aired Sunday night, Sheppard added, "I believe the *Dateline* piece was well produced and highlights the need for better oversight by the individual states. For those so-called 'duct cleaners' who have no standards by which to measure their work, they should be aware that NADCA and its combined membership are always pushing to better educate our consumers. Through better education, consumers aren't as likely to fall prey to these types of unscrupulous and shady practitioners, since they know how to choose a professional duct cleaning company. And that's no BS."

NADCA Executive Director John Schulte commented, "These scams are a problem for consumers and legitimate businesses alike. The low-price coupons offered by these bad actors make it difficult for consumers to know what to expect, while also luring business away from legitimate companies. Consumers often end up paying more than necessary without getting their money's worth." He noted that being an educated consumer is the best approach to avoiding these scams.

According to *Dateline*, Duct Masters shut down their operation within days after being confronted on camera by Chris Hansen. It remains to be seen whether or not this company will change names and relocate its operation.

## **Get the Job Done Right**

NADCA offers the following recommendations to consumers in regards to heating and cooling system cleaning – in layman's terms, air duct cleaning:

- Have your heating and air conditioning system inspected for cleanliness every one to two years and cleaned if necessary. (When maintained properly, most systems only require cleaning once every three to five years.)

- If you decide to have your heating and air conditioning system cleaned, learn about the process by viewing one or two of the videos available at [www.nadca.com](http://www.nadca.com).
- Have the entire heating and cooling system cleaned, including all components – not just the air ducts. This not only helps to keep the system clean, it also helps the system keep your home warm (or cool) and reduces energy use.
- Make sure you have an efficient filter on your heating and cooling system, and change (or clean) it regularly – typically every two or three months.
- Visit [www.NADCA.com](http://www.NADCA.com) to find a qualified company in your area. NADCA members are committed to performing their work in accordance with industry standards, as part of NADCA’s Code of Ethics.

### **View the Segment**

The Dateline segment is available for viewing at:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/40968816#41303490>

Scroll down the list of thumbnail images on the left side of the page to find the portion of the program addressing air duct cleaning (starting with “The Hansen Files, Part 5”).

### **About NADCA**

The National Air Duct Cleaners Association (NADCA) is a not-for-profit trade association comprised of member companies that provide inspection, cleaning and restoration services for residential and commercial heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. NADCA serves the industry and the public by developing standards that promote best practices, while also training and certifying industry professionals. The Association also sponsors a variety of consumer education programs, available free of charge at [www.NADCA.com](http://www.NADCA.com).

### **Contact**

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