



Boiler controls - Are they cost effective?

August 25, 2014 - Green Buildings

Heating is a major cost item for every building, even more so for those with inefficient boilers or problematic heat distribution. Addressing these issues and bringing related costs under control can be a challenge. However, because of the significant savings potential, the time invested in developing solutions can be financially rewarding, especially for larger multifamily buildings. The ideal result is a balance between apartment comfort levels (all apartments, not just some) and lower fuel consumption levels. All too often, however, finding "solutions" to correct uneven heat distribution can be driven by addressing cold apartment complaints rather than solving the underlying problem. Solely addressing cold apartment complaints often evolves into a series of boiler control adjustments leading to higher temperature settings until the complaints stop. End result - the cold apartments are now warm - but the overheated building and boiler issues are not addressed. Fuel consumption - don't even ask. Open windows on cold days can be your serious problem alert. However, because of the large platform of proven solutions for dysfunctional heating systems, there is every reason to stop kicking this can further down the road, especially for buildings with significant fuel bills.

While it is unrealistic to think in terms of a quick off the shelf remedy for buildings looking to bring their heating costs under control, be aware that proven solutions are available. The technological platform of boiler controls and heating distribution systems have come a long way from the era of timed heating cycles. There are now systems available involving temperature sensors, both interior and exterior, boiler monitoring and controls designed to increase efficiencies and more recently dedicated apartment temperature sensors which control motorized valves installed on individual heating risers which regulate the flow of steam or hot water to the apartments served by these individual risers. These new systems can now effectively create multiple heating zones throughout a building which can fine tune temperature levels in each of these zones. The result is higher levels of comfort with lower levels of cost. Cost savings is achieved by fuel saved from the reduction of overheated apartments, utilizing solar gain to offset the need for building heat and more efficient boilers.

Cost effective? For buildings that can utilize these new technologies to improve their efficiencies, the payback can be compelling. Review interesting case studies that might well apply to your building at www.pepcocontrols.com - home page / case studies.

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