

JCG's General Trouble Shooting Technique – By John Gates

Whenever you go to a customer's home for any problem the first thing you should do is talk to the customer.

It may not help you diagnose the problem but it will certainly help customer relations and just may give you a hint to the problem. Try to ascertain whether they reset the unit (and how many times but don't put them on the offensive you would like the truth) and what happened when they did. Also ask whether they turned off any switches after resetting. If they turned off the switch upstairs do not turn it back on until you have turned off the switch on the unit.

When the customer tries to lead you to the thermostat, please don't tell them that it is never the thermostat but rather something like you would like to check down stairs to see if there is power to it. This keeps the customer from feeling like a fool and you if it happens to be the one in a thousand where it is the thermostat.

I don't care what kind of Service Call you are responding to, if you follow these simple guidelines you will do alright.

Be polite and courteous.

Be observant and ask yourself the following questions before you start taking things apart.

Are all the switches turned on? If yes go on

If no turn it on and observe the operation of the burner.

Is there AC power to the unit? If yes go on

If no find out why not. If it is a switch repair it. If it was a fuse or breaker ask yourself why? Was the fuse the correct size and type? Was the breaker broken or weak? Is the unit pulling the correct number of amperes? Do not leave until you are satisfied with all answers.

Is the unit up to temperature?

If yes look for a control or circulator problem

If no look for a burner related problem

Is the unit off on safety?

If no is there AC power to the burner control? If yes check [Oil Burner Trouble Shooting](#)

Do you smell anything unusual? If yes check it out?

Please remember to clean up your work area.