

Standards are high for prospective real estate agents

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

When you consider that a home is probably the single most important item most people are likely to purchase in their lifetimes, it's not surprising that real estate professionals must be highly trained and skilled individuals.

In fact, Ontario real estate practitioners are among the most highly qualified in the world, thanks to the higher educational standards recently established for newly registered salespeople and brokers.

But despite these new standards, becoming a realtor has never been easy. Real estate has always been a demanding profession requiring a commitment to work hard, as well as flexibility and a good deal of self-confidence and self-discipline.

Key ingredients of successful real estate salespeople include:

- an extremely high level of self-motivation and enthusiasm;
- excellent people skills;
- the ability to thrive on challenges and adapt to a hectic lifestyle; and
- an ability to maintain a positive outlook.

A career in real estate also requires a great deal of personal adjustment. Selling homes is not a nine-to-five job and hours can be lengthy and sporadic. Often, there is little time to call your own.

Getting into the real estate business also takes time; it doesn't just 'happen overnight.' Prospective candidates must be willing to invest a good deal of time, money and energy in obtaining the proper education and meeting all the necessary requirements.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Prior to actually receiving a licence to become a real estate salesperson, there are several intensive courses which must be successfully completed. These courses are developed and administered by the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) as the provincial government's nominee. Interested candidates must first complete the Phase One correspondence course, available directly from OREA. This phase gives a general overview of the real estate profession and acts as a career-counselling mechanism.

Phase One registrants receive a kit containing a videotape, textbook, and a package of five weekly assignments. At the end of this course they must write an exam which requires a passing grade of at least 75 per cent.

Phase Two and Three are classroom courses available through most community colleges. Phase Two is comprised of 60 classroom hours covering the technical aspects of real estate brokerage.

Upon successful completion of the second phase, students begin Phase Three, which consists of 90 workshop hours covering the more practical

aspects of real estate brokerage.

Like Phase One, the second and third phase courses have completion exams and students are again required to obtain a passing grade of at least 75 per cent. They are allowed one rewrite per exam, but if they fail to pass the rewrite, they must repeat the entire phase.

Once the three phases have been successfully completed, graduates can apply for their initial sales licence. To obtain a licence, they must show proof that they are employed by a registered real estate broker. In fact, the first two years of a real estate career are considered to be an initiation period during which new licensees are expected to "article" with a brokerage firm. Brokers are expected to provide the necessary supervision and guidance.

During this period, new salespeople are also required to complete three additional courses in order to have their sales licences renewed when they finish articling. The courses are 40 hours each and cover the subjects of real property law, principles of appraisal and principles of mortgage financing. These courses must be successfully completed with a minimum average of 75 per cent. They are offered through most of the province's community colleges.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

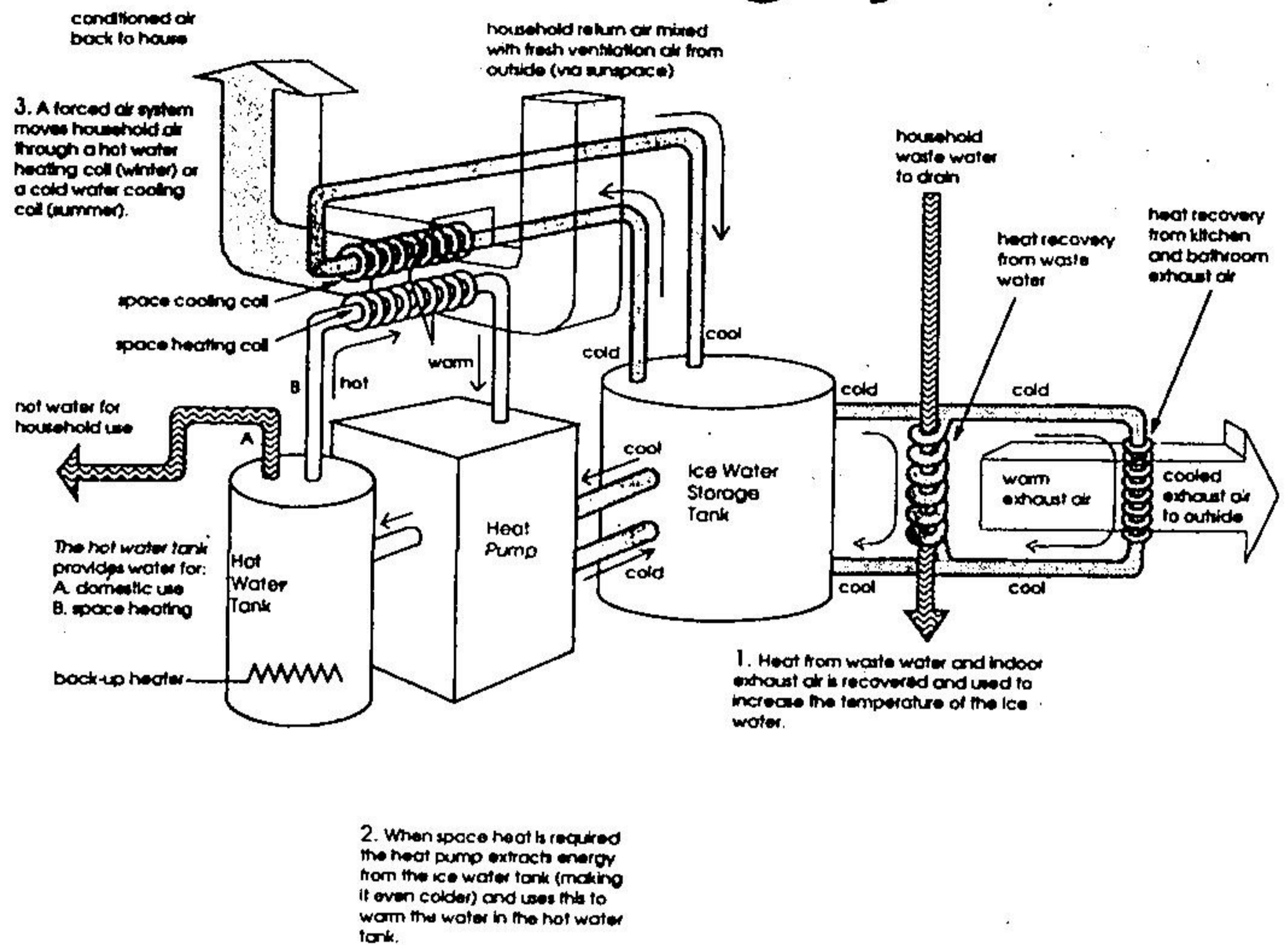
While all the above-mentioned courses are mandatory for people entering the real estate profession, OREA offers additional courses for those who may be interested in becoming office managers or brokers.

The 40-hour Real Estate Office Management course offers a full roster of pertinent topics, such as budgeting, accounting systems, legislation and quality control. To qualify for this course, applicants must have a minimum of two years experience as a licenced salesperson and must complete an additional elective course - either Principles of Property Management, Principles of Industrial, Commercial and Investment Real Estate, or Rural, Recreational and Agricultural Real Estate.

Once candidates have completed the office management course, they may go on to take the Professional Real Estate Brokerage course. This 40-hour course is designed to train people who are interested in setting up their own brokerage operations. Topics include financial records and administration, taxation, and payroll, legal issues and budgeting, to name a few. This course has the same pass requirements as the others, and after successfully passing, course graduates have 12 months to register as brokers with the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

For more information about becoming a real estate professional, contact the Ontario Real Estate Association at 416-445-9910 or your local real estate board.

New house heating system



Schematic diagram of the workings of the Integrated Mechanical System, which combines the heating and cooling functions usually performed by a furnace, hot water heater, air conditioning system, etc. The system achieves its efficiency by recycling most of the heat usually lost from houses. (Pic courtesy of the Ontario Ministry of Energy)

Innovative new heating system makes use of heat loss

By LORRAINE BROWN

A Toronto company specializing in alternative energy systems has developed an innovative new heating system that makes use of the heat normally lost from buildings. The 'integrated mechanical system', or IMS, does the work of the furnace, hot water heater, ventilation system and air conditioner with a single, highly efficient system.

The integrated mechanical system is on display at "The Advanced House" in Brampton, Ontario. The house was a co-operative project sponsored by Ontario Hydro, the Ontario Ministry of Energy, Mines and Resources, Canada, Allen Associates, who developed the new system and a number of private companies. It opened to the public in March, 1990.

The heart of the integrated mechanical system is a heat pump. It collects heat generated by various household activities and coming into the house from outside, and stores it in a 'heat sink' - a 450-litre cold-water tank in the basement. The heat sources include excess room heat, heat extracted from warm air leaving the house via the ventilation system, heat from the sun entering through windows or a sunroom, and the heat in grey water (i.e. water from baths, dishwasher, etc.).

The only source of direct heat in the system is a 6-kilowatt heating coil in the hot water tank, that comes into action when the system is not recycling enough heat to keep the house and the hot water warm enough.

"The idea of recovering waste heat in commercial or residential systems is not new," said Robin Krause, a partner in Allen Associates. "But this system is the first we know of that extracts waste

heat out of the air stream and grey water, and puts it into a thermal storage tank, or heat sink." Krause adds that the company is in the process of patenting the system.

When heat is required in the Advanced House, the heat pump takes heat out of the heat sink, thus cooling it down. The energy stored in the heat sink is 'free' energy, except for the cost of electricity to operate the heat pump.

The integrated mechanical system uses less than half the amount of energy used by a conventional system. Thermal storage, the heat pump and the recovery of waste heat allow for much greater efficiency because of the recycling and use of 'free' heat. Heat pumps have been around for years, and are a very efficient way of generating heat. The heat pump in the IMS is unique in that it is totally indoors, unlike heat pumps that take warmth out of the ground, or air outdoors.

The system itself costs slightly less than buying conventional systems to do the same work, says Krause. But it enables savings on energy costs of 20 per cent or more a year, he adds.

Ontario Hydro is monitoring the Advanced House, to determine exactly how much heat is saved by the new system.



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