

Furnace Not Working

QUESTION: We have left our 1997 34' Excella 1000 trailer in Florida (Land Yacht Harbor) for the past three years. Last spring the furnace would not run. After checking connections and my limited inspection, I contacted an RV Service Technician. He has a truck that appears to be a total shop and he started checking components in the outside compartment. He was able to get the furnace to run by bypassing some connections. He found that all of the controls in the compartment seemed to check-out, including the circuit board. Then he told me that he would need to get on top of the trailer to check the circuit board under the air conditioner cover. Our trailer has the electronic thermostat that controls the fan, air conditioner, heat strip and furnace. He found that the furnace circuit in the main circuit board on the roof was dead. His estimate of replacement was \$600-\$700. However, he recommended that a separate thermostat be installed that would only control the furnace at a very much reduced cost. The electronic thermostat would continue to function. I did nothing, since we were returning home in a week and would contact him when we returned to Florida this fall.

Do you think that installing a separate thermostat is a good idea? Would it work? Do you need more information?

Thanks for your service to WBCCI members and for your recommendation for my furnace problem.

ANSWER: Yes, this will work fine and is a reasonable low cost solution to your problem. When a combination Comfort Control Center (CCC) electronic thermostat is used you have a single temperature sensor and point of control for all of your heating and cooling equipment. This system is very easy to use and provides a centrally located temperature sensor. For your furnace there are two leads that go to an electronic control board located in your air conditioner unit. Without the CCC these leads would go to a conventional wall thermostat designed to work with a house furnace. When you are below the temperature set on the thermostat a set of contacts would close calling for the furnace to start. Once the temperature set on the thermostat is reached the contacts open to turn off the furnace.

The CCC circuit board is expensive since it controls all temperature related equipment in the trailer. If only the furnace control circuit is not working then the solution proposed by your service technician is quite reasonable. He will have to run a pair of wires to the new thermostat and he should install it in the main living area, which will give you a reasonably balanced trailer temperature. Any standard inexpensive house thermostat (Home Depot available) will work fine.

Usually the failed component is the contacts in the furnace relay, which is located on the CCC electronic control board.