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AN ARISTA TECHNICAL ARTICLE

CONTRACT CONFIDENCE:
TRANSITIONING TO A NEW HVAC SERVICE PROVIDER



ARISTA

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INTRODUCTION

Building owners, property managers and plant operators often struggle with concerns and doubts about the quality of their HVAC service contracts — and their confidence in the people behind the contract.

They feel trapped by clauses they don't quite understand, terms that are clouded by legalese, and a general hesitance to make waves or explore alternatives. Many just opt to ride it out, remaining hopeful that nothing will go wrong and put their HVAC service provider to the test in an emergency.

If this scenario sounds familiar, you're not alone. Sometimes, sticking with "the devil you know" — one who knows your equipment — seems preferable to finding and vetting alternatives or trying to break your contract.

But terminating an HVAC contract is not as difficult

as you may think. More importantly, taking action now to transition to a new service provider could mean the difference between a system that runs smoothly and one that forfeits years of operation due to inattention and poor maintenance practices.

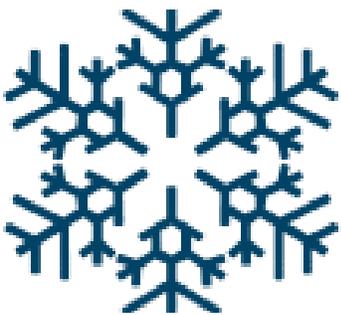
THERE'S NO GOOD REASON TO STAY WITH A BAD CONTRACT

In the business world, few of us in good conscience would consider breaking a contract. But when a building owner or property manager decides a contract simply isn't the right fit, there's no good reason to stick with a poor choice.

If you're not receiving the quality services you signed up for, that alone may be reason to terminate the relationship.

UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL-ESE

Most HVAC service contracts are one year long.



Understanding the terms of your contract is critical. Can you simply end the agreement with 30 days' notice, or are you on the hook for the remaining months of the contract?

Many allow for 30-day written notice to end the agreement, as long as you're current with your payment. Others may require you to pay the remaining months on the contract as a penalty for early termination. That's why it's vital to understand the terms of any contract you sign — before you sign it. For example, is there a clause that any failure on the part of the vendor is cause for termination without penalty? Does the contract auto-renew unless you inform the vendor otherwise?

If your current contract is coming to an end soon, now is the right time to consider transitioning to a new service provider.

THE BENEFITS OF AN INDEPENDENT HVAC SYSTEM & MAINTENANCE REVIEW

The best way to determine if you're receiving the service levels promised in your maintenance agreement is to call in an independent contractor. Similar to a home inspector's role, an independent HVAC professional will conduct a thorough review of your HVAC system and the condition of its mechanical systems. This should include critical components such as the furnace, heat exchanger, evaporator coil, condensing unit, refrigerant lines and thermostats.

An independent contractor's report will reveal any telltale signs that you're not receiving the systematic skilled maintenance outlined in your service contract, for example:

- Clogged filters
- Slipping belts
- Worn pulleys
- Dirty drain pans
- Plugged condensate lines

If these conditions are not addressed properly and on a regular schedule, they can seriously impact the overall performance of your system, its efficiency, and, sooner or later, its longevity.

ASKING THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

Let's assume you really like your HVAC service company. It's a comfort to recognize familiar faces when they make service visits, and long-term relationships have their advantages. A long-time provider is familiar with your equipment, its location and its quirks, which saves you time because they can get right to work with little hand holding.

Yet, it still pays to take a fresh look at the issues with an expert outsider. Why? A longstanding relationship can make you reluctant to dive into the kind of open dialogue your business needs and your tenants and customers deserve.

If you feel uncertain about your maintenance agreement and the services you're receiving, or want to justify changing vendors, an independent review may give you the peace of mind — or proof — you're seeking.

MAKING A CHANGE? HERE'S HOW TO DO IT RIGHT

If you've determined that a change of HVAC service providers makes sense for your business, make sure you're asking the right questions to find the best possible partner for your needs.

Often, the language and format of a contract will provide an important first clue if a vendor is right for you or not. Do they state things as clearly and simply as possible, or do they hide behind complicated



Does a service vendor’s contract state things as clearly and simply as possible, or do they hide behind complicated language that is difficult to interpret?

language that is difficult to interpret? Are contracts professionally written and presented, or do they appear sloppy and incomplete?

At Arista, our goal is to get every relationship off to the strongest possible start. That’s why we’ve designed a process that demonstrates we’re working with you, not against you.

- Our maintenance contracts are always clear on what’s included and what’s not, so you know exactly what you’re buying. We eliminate gray areas.
- The contract language is always simple, easy to understand and interpret.

SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITIONING TO A NEW HVAC MAINTENANCE PROVIDER

Next, ask possible vendors about their process for easing the transition to a new service provider. For example, Arista provides every new client with a detailed “welcome letter” outlining key information, such as complete contact details for your point of contact for every aspect of the services we provide. From equipment installation and billing to arranging an unscheduled service call, we’re experts in seamless transition.

We also conduct a thorough survey as part of the

service contract process. This ensures we’re on top of the type of equipment you have, where it’s located, and any special needs in advance of our first service visit.

Our goal is to make life easier with efficient and responsive service.

DOES SIZE MATTER? YOU BET

HVAC service providers come in all sizes. The secret to success is finding the right one for your needs — not too big that you get lost in the shuffle, but not too small that they can’t respond quickly in an emergency.

Though it’s nice to have the same familiar service technician on each and every service call, it can also be risky. What if Bob’s on vacation when an emergency hits? Or he leaves the company? It’s also human nature to get complacent after a while. Who’s checking Bob’s work to confirm it’s up to par?

Arista takes a different approach, structuring our service department so there’s never just one technician who is intimately familiar with your system. Our area supervisors are senior professionals whose only responsibility is to support our techs and conduct inspections of the work they perform. This redundancy guarantees our customers the benefits of consistency, objectivity and convenience on

multiple levels.

THE BOTTOM LINE: CHOOSE WISELY

Whether you're unsatisfied with your current HVAC maintenance provider or nearing the end of a contract and want to review your options, it may make sense to have a qualified, independent third party evaluate your equipment. It may give you the insights you need to feel comfortable your current vendor has your back, or the ammunition to break a contract that's just not living up to your expectations.

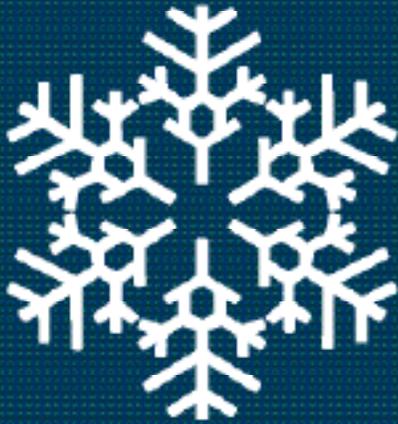


FREQUENTLY (UN)ASKED QUESTIONS

How can you be sure a service provider is up to the task of keeping your HVAC system running smoothly, minimizing the chances for expensive and inconvenient breakdowns? Use these 10 questions to see if they might be the right fit for you:

1. How long have you been in the HVAC maintenance industry?
2. How many trucks does your company have on the road?
3. How large is your contract base?
4. What is your average response time in an emergency?
5. What references can you provide that are similar to my type and size of business?
6. What type of training do your technicians receive?
7. How do you stay on top of the latest industry best practices?
8. How much did your company invest in training last year?
9. Do you have a process for checking a technician's work?
10. What process do you use for a seamless transition from our old vendor?

At Arista, we expect you to ask us these questions and we're confident you'll be 100% pleased with our answers. In fact, the more you know, the more there is to like about Arista.



ARISTA

ABOUT ARISTA AIR CONDITIONING CORP.

Whether you're responsible for the installation of a new HVAC system or inherited legacy equipment, Arista has the experience to service and maintain any system throughout its lifecycle. Across the tri-state area, we're recognized as one of the region's most respected and referred HVAC experts. When you work with Arista, you're backed by an industry leader that has earned its reputation through two generations of quality service and decades of trustworthy business conduct.

Peace of mind at a fair price

Your account is managed by a senior Arista technician and backed by an expert staff of over 160 highly trained professionals. Arista boasts a comprehensive program of continuous staff training and professional development on state-of-the-art practices and processes.

Arista clients also enjoy these benefits:

- Quick-to-respond, accessible workforce and a fleet of 100+ vehicles
- 24/7 emergency standby service
- 30,000 sq. ft. corporate warehouse facility stocked with over 55,000 parts
- Industry recognition as the only NY state company to earn both the prestigious MSCA

STAR and GreenStar designations

- LEED Accredited Professionals to assist in making smarter HVAC choices

Questions? Call Arista today.

We hope you've found this guide to be a handy reference as you evaluate transitioning to a new HVAC maintenance provider.

We invite you to call us for a quote on your equipment purchase or service needs. We think you'll agree that hearing what we have to say will be one of the best decisions you make in researching HVAC service providers. Reach an Arista HVAC specialist today at 718-937-4001 or email info@aristair.com.

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