Water Level

If the heat throughout the system is inadequate, either the boiler isn’t heating or the water level is too low. If the boiler isn’t heating, the furnace may malfunction. Specific procedures for oil, gas, and electric heating systems are detailed earlier in this chapter.

The second possibility, a low water level in the system's boiler, is easier to handle. The level of water in the boiler should be maintained at about half full, and there should be an air space, or “chest,” between the surface of the water and the top of the tank. Without the chest, the boiler can’t work up a full head of steam, and the water overfills the return lines and may trip the relief valve. To correct, keep the water level at half full. If the water level in the boiler is consistently low, check the pipes for leaks. If you spot a leak at a pipe connection,