

Tips For “Greening” Your HVAC System

Ways To Be Energy And Cost Efficient For The Long Haul And Short Term

(NAPSA)—If you’re like most people, you’ve probably resigned yourself to rising utility bills and energy costs. But the good news is that there are plenty of things you can do to be more energy efficient and comfortable all year long, and a great place to start is with your heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) system.

In a recent study, 94 percent of consumers rated energy efficiency as being equally important as product quality when it comes to purchasing an HVAC system. By installing an energy-efficient HVAC system, not only are consumers doing something good for the environment, they’re also helping their pocketbooks.

Here are a few tips for “greening” your HVAC system and keeping heating and cooling costs from freezing or scorching your wallet.

• **Maintain your furnace and air conditioner**

According to the Alliance to Save Energy, the average household spent almost \$2,100 on home energy costs in 2007, with heating and cooling costs accounting for about one-half of the typical residential energy bill.

Having a professional perform maintenance in the spring and fall, before cooling and heating seasons begin, will increase the life of the system, improve energy efficiency, reduce pollutants and save you money.

Help ensure top efficiency by cleaning or replacing the filter monthly and twice a month during seasons when the unit runs more often. The standard 1-inch filter is found in most home central systems.

Efficiency can also be maintained by keeping outdoor units clear of snow, ice and other debris.



Having a professional perform maintenance before cooling and heating seasons begin can improve energy efficiency and save you money.

• **Know when to replace your appliances**

“One of the things you can do to really improve the value of your home is to install an energy-efficient HVAC system,” says Brad Staggs, home improvement expert.

If your furnace, air conditioner or other major appliances such as heat pumps are more than 10 years old, it may make sense to replace them with newer, more energy-efficient models.

Look for the most efficient appliances. For example, the Trane XV95 is the world’s most efficient gas furnace and the first to attain up to a 96.7 percent Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) rating, exceeding the government’s minimum AFUE rating for furnaces and boilers by 20 percent. By installing this efficient furnace, you can save up to 40 percent annually on energy consumption and, in turn, lower your energy bills.

Pay attention to the SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) rating; the higher, the bet-

ter. For instance, the Trane XL19i—with one of the highest SEER ratings available of up to 19.5—could save a family up to 59 percent on its annual energy bill.

If possible, plan ahead and consider replacing major appliances, such as air conditioners, out of season. Winter is a slow time of year for many contractors, and they might be more willing to negotiate on the price. Knocking even 10 percent off the cost of a central air-conditioning system could mean saving hundreds or thousands of dollars.

• **Turn the heat or air down (or up)**

Adjusting a nonprogrammable thermostat is free and easy and can yield big savings. You can save about 3 percent of your heating costs for every degree you lower your thermostat during winter months.

During summer, you can cut cooling costs 3 to 4 percent for every degree you raise your thermostat.

• **Install a programmable thermostat**

Programmable thermostats are easy to install and will shave about 10 percent off your heating and cooling bills, according to the Alliance to Save Energy. The average annual savings is about \$100 and programmable thermostats often pay for themselves in two years or less.

Programmable thermostats are designed to maximize the performance of your home comfort systems with reliable and accurate temperature control. Because you can program them to raise or lower the temperature when you’re not home, you also save energy while still maintaining your standard of comfort.

For more information, visit trane.com.