

ENERGY MATTERS

What Homeowners Need To Know

(NAPSA)—Good news: We're living in a new era in home comfort. By federal law, the minimum efficiency standard for newly manufactured air conditioners and heat pumps recently increased from 10 SEER to 13 SEER.

SEER is short for Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio, and the higher the SEER, the more efficient the system. For example, a 13 SEER system is about 30 percent more efficient than a 10 SEER system. According to the Environmental and Energy Study Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting environmentally sustainable societies, for most families, the extra cost of a 13 SEER unit versus a 10 SEER unit is recouped through lower utility bills within three and a half years. The average central air conditioner lasts about 18 years.

Because of these recent SEER changes, it pays to understand how SEER affects system performance. The energy efficiency of a 13 SEER residential cooling system, for example, requires a larger condensing unit and indoor coil, and each unit can be as much as one and a half times the size of those in a 10 SEER system. The larger size allows more thermal energy to be transferred from the home to the outside. Just as important, the outdoor unit must be matched with an indoor coil that is just as efficient. Improperly matched components can put additional stress on a system, which can cause it to fail.

Once the SEER has been evaluated, another efficiency aspect



to consider, when selecting a heating or cooling system, is whether the unit has an ENERGY STAR® rating. ENERGY STAR is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program that promotes energy-efficient consumer products. According to the EPA, the average American family spends \$1,900 per year on energy costs, much of which goes to heating and cooling their home. However, the EPA also notes that consumers can save as much as 20 percent annually on total energy costs by purchasing ENERGY STAR products and following the recommendations of the program.

If you are considering replacing or upgrading the HVAC system in your home, you may care to talk to the experts at Coleman® Heating and Air Conditioning. They can help you select a qualified dealer that can assist in choosing an energy-efficient system, such as an Echelon™ series air conditioner or heat pump, manufactured by Johnson Controls. To learn more, visit www.coleman.ac.com or call (877) 874-7378.