



Save Energy Keeping Your Summer Cool

There are ways to reduce cooling costs while maintaining comfort. **FIRST**, reduce heat gain by reflecting or blocking sunlight from home; **SECOND**, reduce heat-generating sources in home; and **THIRD**, remove built-up heat in the home. Reducing summertime humidity is also needed to stay comfortable. It is important to maintain and repair the air conditioning system and when replacing old air conditioner—make sure new system is properly sized.

BEST PRACTICE AREA: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

DID YOU KNOW?

Air Conditioning began in the early 1800s when Dr. John Gorrie came up with an idea to circulate air over ice, thus cooling a patient's room. This practice was in use during the late 1800s, when President Garfield was in ill health, when an ice contraction lowered room temperature by 20 degrees. In the early 1920s, Willis Carrier invented air conditioning units similar to modern models.

EASY TIPS

- **Set your air conditioner's thermostat** to the highest comfortable temperature setting during the day. For every degree raised, you reduce cooling costs 3 to 5 percent.
- **Don't place warm appliances** (lamps or TV's) near the air conditioning thermostat because the warmth will cause air conditioner to think the whole house needs extra cooling
- **Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms.** Turn off ceiling fan when room is unoccupied.
- **Shut the shades** to keep out the sun's heat.
- **Don't block the flow**—move furniture and other objects away from registers.
- **Reduce heat and moisture** that result from indoor cooking by keeping lids on pans especially when boiling food for a long time. Use smaller appliances and cook outdoors whenever possible.
- **Keep your air conditioner free of obstructions** so that air can flow freely. Clean the outdoor condenser every year with a strong stream of water.
- **Keep interior lights low**—light fixtures generate heat, and therefore add to your cooling costs.
- **Switch to CFLs**—Compact Fluorescent Lights run cooler than incandescent light bulbs and use less energy.

AIR CONDITIONING MYTHS VS. FACTS

Myth: Setting your air conditioner thermostat to its lowest setting will cool the home faster.

Fact: The thermostat is not a throttle; setting it lower than necessary will not cool the home any faster.

Myth: The bigger the air conditioner, the better it cools the house.

Fact: Air conditioners cool and dehumidify. An oversized air conditioner can quickly cool a home, but results in it frequently cycling on and off, which doesn't allow it enough time to remove moisture and may make the house feel clammy. A properly sized A/C will operate for a longer period of time during the hottest days, which will remove that uncomfortable moisture. Although a properly sized unit will run longer, it will be more efficient and use less energy.

Myth: The size of the house is all that's needed to size an air conditioning system.

Fact: A good load calculation program takes into account window types, window orientation and window shading; insulation of ceiling, walls and floor; air leakage and many other factors such as the color of the roof and the number of occupants. Using the square footage of a home to size an air conditioner is outdated and will almost always yield an oversized system. Don't use a contractor who wants to size your unit solely on the square footage of your house.

AIR CONDITIONING FACTS:

In the commercial sector, heating, ventilating and air conditioning accounts for 40 to 60 percent of total energy in use. For residential units, 23 percent of homes in 1978 had air conditioning, with that number growing to 47 percent by 1997.

Air conditioners carry a rating known as "SEER," or seasonal energy efficient ratio. Higher numbers are typically more efficient than lower numbers. For example, 12 percent is better than 10 percent.

CHECK YOUR DUCKS FOR QUACKS...

Check your air ducts for gaps at the joints. Gaps in the ductwork can allow cool air to escape and not reach its intended destination. Seal off all gaps in the ductwork with sealant or duct tape to minimize cooling loss to unintended areas of your home.

