

MAINTENANCE OF YOUR AIR CONDITIONER

It is May and the heat is already scorching, the humidity in the air almost oppressive and what is more, it will only worsen. And surely everyone would want their ACs to be in perfect condition. Here are a few tips on the right kind of maintenance for your ACs.

- Make sure your AC doesn't get overloaded; check the fuse or circuit breaker if it doesn't operate.
- Remember to replace or clean the filter and have your mechanic clean the evaporator and condenser coils regularly, for the air conditioner to cool your home efficiently.
- Get your thermostat cleaned regularly and replace it if necessary.
- If your compressor doesn't work properly, call a service person immediately.
- Any noise that your AC makes, needs to be checked by your mechanic.
- Giving your air conditioning system a good electrostatic air filter is the best thing you can do for your air conditioner. A good air filter will extend the life of your air conditioner because the important parts, like the blower assembly, the cooling coil, and other inner parts will stay cleaner, operate more efficiently and last longer.
- Filters trap the dust in your conditioned space, but over time, these filters get clogged with dust, which is an additional load on your air-conditioner. Clean your filters at least once a month. In Central Plants, filters are present in the Air Handling Unit. Clean them regularly. Also keep the condenser tube and cooling tower fills clean, and maintain proper flow of chilled and condenser water.
- Avoid frequent opening of doors/windows. A door kept open can result in doubling the power consumption of your AC.
- Ensure direct sunlight (and heat) do not enter the air-conditioned space, particularly in the afternoons.
- Most people believe that a thermostat set to a lower temperature than desired will force your air-conditioner to cool faster, not really, all it does, is make your air-conditioner operate for longer. Moreover, you will have an unnecessarily chilly room and wasted power. Every degree lower on the temperature setting results in an extra 3-4% of power consumed. Hence, once you've found yourself a comfortable temperature and set the thermostat at that level, avoid touching the thermostat thereafter.
- Once an air-conditioning system has been designed and installed avoid any major change in the heat-load on the AC. This will add to wasted power.

Regular maintenance will ensure efficient performance. Cleaning of filters, de-scaling of the heat exchangers, lubricating friction points, such as fans, motors and shafts should be done regularly. Prudent utility management will save substantial energy on the air-conditioning. Simple measures like isolating areas of the building not in use, setting indoor temperatures in the highest point acceptable to the largest segment of occupants, and shutting off the system when not in use will save energy.

AFTER SALES SERVICE

- Buy an AC, which gives you a good deal for after sale service and at least a warranty of 1-5 years.
- Buy the AC from a reliable and good manufacturer or dealer.
- Ensure that your system is studied every three months or so by a trained technician. A service contract with your dealer/manufacturer will make you tension free, as they take preventive measure checks where any minor defects that come to light are promptly dealt with, saving major repairs, downtime and cost, apart from the higher power bills due to inefficient operation till repairs. Having an Annual Maintenance contract is a good idea.
- **Up-gradation** certainly helps keep your air-conditioner in excellent, energy-efficient, condition. The cost of maintaining older systems may in the long run exceed the cost of a fresh investment. Besides, gradual inefficiencies set in due to wear-and-tear will result in higher power bills. Hence, older and inefficient components can be replaced gradually with new technology, more efficient components, which will result in power savings. Your supplier will be the best person to tell you when your system or part of your system needs replacement. He may also suggest retrofit of latest components that may result in your air-conditioner operating more efficiently.

PROBLEMATIC ACS

Clogged drain lines:

A clogged drain line is usually caused by algae (the green moss-like stuff!) build-up inside the drain line. The air handler provides a cool, damp environment for development of molds and mildew and if left untreated these growths can spread into your ductwork. Get rid of these molds by using a disinfectant (consult your dealer). Make sure that the face of the cooling or evaporator coil is clean so that air can pass through freely.

Make your AC dirt free:

A good air filter will extend the life of your air conditioner, as the important parts, like the blower assembly, the cooling coil, and other inner parts will stay cleaner, operate more efficiently and last longer. And as a side benefit of having a good air filter, you will have much healthier indoor air, free of dust, mold, mildew, etc.

Your system does not cool well?

Get your AC checked; it is possible that the refrigerating agent, which cools the air, is leaking. Leak repairs are expensive so if it's a small leak it may be more cost effective to recharge the system every two or three years. But do call an expert to do so.

Air around unit is blocked?

Chances are, the coil is dirty. Flush the outside coil with a garden hose, but keep water clear of electricals. If the fan on the outside unit is running but you do not hear the sound of the compressor running, then the compressor is malfunctioning. You got trouble, call an AC contractor.

Air return is sucking in hot air?

If you have an air return duct in a hot area such as an attic or garage, make sure that this duct is not broken, split, or disconnected and sucking in hot air.

Window AC leaking water into the room?

Your window unit should tilt down slightly on the outside. The part that removes humidity [where water accumulates] is the front coil, which is inside your home. Normally, there is a trough and/or a drain tube that lets the water run to the rear of the unit. If the drain gets clogged, water will back up and leak inside. Ask your mechanic to clean the chassis and make sure all screws are tight.

How can I reduce heat input into my room?

1. A false ceiling, like in hotels and clubs etc, helps in keeping the heat out.
2. Providing curtains/ blinds /sun film on windows reduces heat input into the room.
3. Insulating the ceiling, which is exposed to the sun with 50-mm thermocole drastically, reduces heat input into the room.

To what distance will a Window AC or Split AC throw air?

A normal Window AC or split AC will throw air upto 15 feet. However, special Split units are available to throw air upto 30 feet.

Keeping your AC in good condition not only increases efficiency and saves energy, it also makes for cleaner indoor air, keeping your home away from all sorts of molds, mildew, pollutants etc. So with these tips on AC maintenance, you should breeze through the summer months without your AC giving up on you.

Reference:

http://www.compareindia.com/tips/maintenance_tips_for_ac.htm