

Summer HVAC Tips

When summer is heating up, we know tenants are turning on their AC, so we like to share reminders on system capabilities to cut down on unnecessary service calls.

Before you call for service, check these things:

- Gas - Has your service been interrupted.
- Emergency switch should be in the "on" position.
- Tripped breaker, this is very common.
- Dirty filters – a dirty filter can greatly decrease flow and freeze up your system
- Frozen system – check the inside and outside HVAC units for ice. Turn off if iced.
- Thermostat needs a fresh battery.

Tenants may be responsible to pay service fees or trip charges if no system malfunctions are found at the time of service. We don't want that to happen, so be sure that you familiarize yourself with your system capabilities based on the outside temperatures.

During **extreme heat**, there can be up to a 20 degree difference in the outside temperature and your interior temperature, even if your system is running all day at full capacity.

Upstairs hot? Hot air naturally rises. Upper floors are going to be warmer than the lower floors. This is normal and a service call is not likely needed for this alone.

Feel fine, but temperature setting seems off? Try not to fixate on the number so much as your comfort. Sometimes, the thermostat location can be in an area that is different from where you spent most of your time.

What else can you do to help stay cool?

- Ensure you don't have any extra heat sources adding to the warmth. Turn off heat producing lights, avoid using your oven, and clothes dryers. Do those activities at night when possible when the weather is severe.
- Keep blinds, curtains and shades closed during the hottest part of the summer day. No Blinds? Add curtains. Direct sunlight increases the load on your system. Some curtains coverings are marketed as "black out" curtains and reduce heat and sunlight.
- Arrange your furniture and drapes to keep all supply registers and return grills free from obstructions so your system can circulate conditioned air to all areas of the home. If your system can't pull in much air, then it can't put out much either.
- Vacuum the return grills regularly to remove dust to help ensure good airflow. Do not use expensive filters or HEPA filters. Use the cheapest filter and change it monthly. Filters that are too thick may seem like a great idea, but it reduces air flow and overworks your system and reduces the output. Again, if your system can't pull in much air, then it can't put out much either.
- When winter is over, close your fireplace flue. Its purpose is to let hot air escape in the winter, an open flue sucks up cool, conditioned air out of your home. Not all fireplaces have a chimney FYI.
- Exhaust fans can blow away a houseful of cool air. Turn off the kitchen and bathroom fans as soon as they've done their job.
- Adjust fan direction - Use your fans and be sure to adjust direction of your fans by season. Ceiling fans have a switch on the motor housing that changes the direction in which the blades turn.

SUMMER FAN SETTING: When it's warm, the blades of a fan normally push air down, causing cool air near the floor to travel outward and mix with air at the edges of the room. The process makes for more even cooling, and just the air movement in the room alone can make it feel cooler by 4 degrees or so! Set the air higher and save some \$\$\$.

WINTER FAN SETTING: Instead of forcing air downward, the blades will push air up toward the ceiling, where hot air normally rises, and drive it back down around the edges of the room. That can result in more even heating.