

# Is your central air conditioning system ready for the summer?

Do you rely on central air conditioning to make the summer's heat and humidity more bearable? If so, now is the time to ensure that your equipment is in tip-top shape.



If you fail to maintain it, your cooling system will suffer a steady decline in performance while your energy use and utility bills will increase.

While there are some maintenance jobs that you can do to prolong the life of your equipment and keep it running at peak efficiency, other jobs are best left to the professionals. Some of the simple things that can be done by any homeowner include:

- Filters should be routinely cleaned or replaced
- Ensure that the outdoor condensing unit has adequate airflow by checking that the area around the unit is cleared of debris and that foliage is trimmed back at least two feet

Other maintenance tasks are best left to a trained technician. Homeowners searching for a qualified heating contractor to ensure their cooling system is properly serviced and maintained can access a user-friendly website [www.hrac.ca](http://www.hrac.ca) or call toll-free at 1-877-411-HRAC. Those maintenance tasks include the following:

- The evaporator coil should be checked every year and cleaned as necessary— dirt reduces airflow and insulates

the coil, reducing the cooling ability of your air conditioner

- Outdoor condenser coils can become dirty as well and should be cleaned
- Aluminum coil fins on evaporator and condenser coils outdoors should be checked and, if necessary, straightened to ensure that airflow is not blocked
- Supply and return air ducts should be checked for leaks.

A qualified contractor can detect and correct duct leaks that could allow cool air to leak out and hot air to leak in, wasting an enormous amount of energy

• The proper working pressures in the refrigeration circuit should be checked. Again, only a qualified contractor will have the tools and experience necessary to determine that your cooling system is operating as it should be.

Some government agencies and utilities have recognized the importance of maintaining equipment for better energy efficiency and offer incentives and rebates for homeowners to maintain or replace their units. To see if any such programs are available in your area log onto [www.hrac.ca](http://www.hrac.ca) under information library, click onto rebates and incentives.

So "spring" into action before the temperature soars and make sure your air conditioner is ready to handle take the heat.

—News Canada

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