

New Cooling Systems

New Government Mandate Affects Home Cooling Systems, Efficiency

About 50 percent of the energy used in a typical home today is spent on heating and cooling, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It's no wonder that your utility bills can be as unpredictable as the weather! Now is the time to learn a little bit about the new government standards affecting air conditioners and heat pumps and to consider purchasing a new home comfort system that could help you save substantial money over the years ahead.

Air conditioners and heat pumps must meet or exceed minimum efficiency standards set by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). This January, the minimum standard rose from 10 to 13 SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio). Although you do not need to replace your existing unit if it is less than 13 SEER, doing so could shave up to 23 percent off your energy bill while providing real environmental benefits through decreased energy consumption.

Manufacturers Reach New SEER Heights

Rick Roetken, director of product marketing at Bryant Heating & Cooling, pared down to the gist of the SEER equation: "Basically, as the SEER level rises, product efficiency increases and you'll reduce utility costs, meaning more money in your pocket during cooling season." Bryant has produced the most comprehensive line of 13 SEER units for nearly a decade, Roetken added, which has provided the company with a great deal of experience with high efficiency product design, manufacturing and performance.

This year, Bryant is introducing a new line of products that will provide exceedingly comfortable indoor air with value, reliability and style. The company's new 13 SEER models will be up to 20 percent smaller in footprint, weigh up to 30 percent less and use up to 40 percent less refrigerant -- while decreasing in operating sound levels. The improved top-of-the-line Evolution System will reach levels of up to 21 SEER while allowing users to control heating, cooling, humidity, indoor air quality, schedules and maintenance reminders from a single, easy-to-navigate control.

When it comes to SEER, increased cost-savings and reduced environmental impact go hand-in-hand. The new 13 SEER standard conserves energy and reduces associated carbon dioxide emissions. However, just considering efficiency levels is not enough; you also want to consider the refrigerant used in your cooling system. A 40 percent decrease in the amount of refrigerant in new 13 SEER units is substantial.. Bryant uses chlorine-free, non-ozone-depleting Puron refrigerant in most of its cooling systems to ensure that refrigerant availability and environmental responsibility extend well into the future.

Stay Cool, Save Money

In addition to providing basic product advice, Roetken also offers these additional cost-saving tips:

- * Schedule a qualified heating and cooling service technician to inspect your central air system. Remember to check the system's filter each month and clean or replace it.
- * Caulk and weather strip all cracks and openings to the outdoors, which could save you up to 10 percent or more on energy bills, according to the Alliance to Save Energy.
- * Consider installing a programmable thermostat, which can save about \$100 each year in energy costs, according to the EPA.
- * Switch to cooler, energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs which use about 66 percent less energy than standard bulbs.
- * Use ceiling fans and portable fans to circulate air inside your home.
- * Do not run a central air conditioner when the outdoor air temperature is below 70 F. Operating a residential air conditioner in cool temperatures may cause premature compressor failure. Instead, ventilate your home by opening windows.
- * Avoid using appliances that consume a lot of energy during the day when the outside temperature rises-wash dishes and clothes in the early morning or late evening. This will reduce heat and humidity levels in your home.

For more information and to find a local dealer near you, visit www.bryant.com or call (888) 999-BRYANT. For more cost-saving tips, visit epa.gov.