

Top 5 Areas to Check if Your Home isn't Cooling

When your home doesn't feel as comfortable as it should in the heat of summer, the air conditioner is often the first to blame. Before calling an air conditioner maintenance expert, troubleshooting the problem on your own could bring the relief you seek at a fraction of the cost.



WHERE TO LOOK IF YOUR AIR CONDITIONER STOPS COOLING YOUR HOME

✓ Air Filter

- A/C air filters trap dirt, pollen, dander and other particles
- As the filter traps contaminants, it reduces airflow to the A/C, affecting its cooling capabilities
- Change the air filter every three months

✓ Thermostat

- Check thermostat batteries and replace them if they are dead
- Ensure the thermostat is set to the "cooling" function
- Is the setpoint temperature cooler than the ambient temperature in your home?
- If adjusting the thermostat doesn't seem to make a difference, you might need to repair or replace it

✓ Outdoor Air Conditioner Cabinet

- Remove fallen branches, leaves and debris from the top of the A/C unit
- To promote proper airflow, clear the area around the outdoor unit by at least 2 feet
- Keep toys, lawn furniture, garden tools and other items at least 2 feet away
- If the A/C has a coating of dust and debris, gently rinse it with a garden hose
- If the components within the cabinet appear dirty, such as the fins, hire an HVAC contractor to perform air conditioner maintenance

✓ Refrigerant Levels

- Low refrigerant levels are one of the top reasons that air conditioners fail
- Find the two copper lines that go into the air conditioner's condenser. When the A/C has sufficient refrigerant levels, the larger of the two lines (the one with insulation) should be sweating and cold to the touch. If the line is not sweating or does not feel cold, the A/C needs more refrigerant.
- Only a licensed HVAC contractor should refill the refrigerant in an A/C unit
- A good contractor will determine the cause of the low refrigerant levels and remedy the problem

✓ Ductwork

- The ductwork in your home circulates air to and from the HVAC system
- When the ductwork has a tear, cold air from the A/C will fill the empty spaces surrounding the ducts (i.e., walls) instead of the rooms in your home
- Leaky ducts can also cause uneven temperatures, increased dust levels and make a home feel muggy
- Hire an HVAC contractor to inspect, repair and clean your ductwork. It is a good idea to do this every three to five years.