All Year Cooling & Heating's September 2013 Blog Articles

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SUNRISE, FL, USA, November 6, 2013 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Keeping Warm on a Budget - posted on September 30, 2013

Living in the Sunshine State, it feels like summer all-year round. There are some cold periods, but usually the climate stays tropical. But for other states, residents have to keep track of their expenses for winter. Everyone wants to utilize cost-effective methods of staying warm while staying on a budget.

A space heater uses less electricity than a furnace; they concentrate heat in the room(s) most used. If you mostly spend your time in one or two rooms, it doesn't make sense to heat the entire house. Place heaters in key rooms, and keep them closed to isolate the heat. Modern heaters have numerous safety features for more efficiency than older models, but always check electrical cords and connections.
If you spend much time at home on the computer, consider a heating pad or blanket. Heating blankets are a great way to create concentrated warmth. Like space heaters, heating pads and blankets can be found at garage sales and thrift stores. Exercise caution, as there are electrical components built into the fabric that needs to thorough examination.

Ceiling fans can spin in both directions. In one direction, they blow cold air down; in the other direction, they push cold air up. Change the spinning direction on all your ceiling fans to the appropriate setting for the season. With cold weather, you want the cold air to be pushed up, allowing the warm air to remain in the room(s).

A small hole can make a huge difference to the energy efficiency of any room. Check your house for imperfect windows or door gaps. Seal leaks with weather stripping or caulking. Even a blanket used to block the gap under a door can make a noticeable difference.
Cooking a meal at home will contribute to the indoor heat. The oven and other cooking appliances will heat up the kitchen and surrounding areas, like the dining room.
Fireplaces are a great source of heat. Firewood can often be cheaper than electricity or gas. Make sure to have a clean flue and use the appropriate fireplace tools. Small improvements can make for big difference for you and your family this winter.

Why an Air Conditioning Tune-Up Is a Good Idea - posted on September 28, 2013

Would you like to save money on energy costs? Are you looking for a way to help your expensive air conditioning equipment last longer? Are you interested in improving your A/C system's performance and efficiency? Have you ever wished that you could help prevent costly and inconvenient air conditioning breakdowns? Do you want to protect your family with better air conditioning safety? Is comfort important in your home?

Regular air conditioning tune-ups can bring you all these benefits, and more. A yearly tune-up of your heating and cooling system can improve efficiency and comfort and pre-season check-ups can prevent future problems and unwanted costs. It's recommended to leave the tune-up process to a qualified professional. A trained air conditioning specialist can troubleshoot for potential problems while performing the necessary checks and maintenance activities. A professional contractor will also be familiar with your particular brand and model, and may be able to offer specific suggestions for optimum operational efficiency.

A thorough A/C tune-up should include:

- Inspect coolant levels and pressure
- Calibrate thermostat(s) and check proper cycle and temperature
- Inspect and tighten wiring, contacts, capacitors and relay
- Ensure the evaporator coil is clean
- Ensure the condensate drain is clear
- Inspect and clean the condenser
- Inspect the outdoor disconnect
- Inspect the condenser fan motor and blades; lubricate if needed
- Check compressor amps at startup
- Perform additional safety and efficiency checks, as needed

At All Year Cooling & Heating, our specialist can handle these important tasks and are glad to share maintenance tips and answer any of your questions about your equipment. Your AYC technician will also present a completed Tune-Up Checklist and will share any concerns about or recommendations for your air conditioning system's peak performance. Do everything you can to protect your system today! Contact All Year Cooling & Heating at 888-496-4395 to schedule an A/C tune-up today!

Furnace DIY Maintenance Tips - posted on September 25, 2013

Proper furnace maintenance can reduce energy consumption and increases its life. When furnaces break down and malfunction, there are certainly high costs involved in getting them inspected and repaired. To prevent most major disasters with your furnace, some simple

maintenance is in order.

Monthly
It's always recommended to inspect your furnace filters at lead once a month. Most disposable filters should be changed monthly; some may last longer than that. Any permanent filters should be washed and rinsed monthly. Make sure to install carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Test them out on a monthly basis, if you already have them, as carbon monoxide is fatal in large amounts. Carbon monoxide detectors are required by law in 25 states.

Other Maintenance
Before starting, make sure to turn off the power and fuel supply. If your furnace has a belt-driven component, test the belt for cracks or damage. Replace them if necessary. Belt-driven systems need to be oiled yearly; a few drops of oil should do the trick. Reset the damper as the season changes. The damper should be clearly marked and easy to set in the right place. Dampers in other parts of your home will need re-adjusting throughout the year. Check the burner flames. This is the one occasion where it's okay to leave the power and fuel supply on to observe the flames. Remove the combustion chamber door and look at the flames; they should be fairly even and blue. If they're yellow, you're either breathing on them or there's something wrong with the burners. Do not adjust the burners yourself. Carefully remove the blower from the furnace. Vacuum carefully and thoroughly; do not jostle any wires too much. If you're not sure you can get the blower vacuumed well enough, don't do it. An improper cleaning can unbalance the system.

Inspections
Full furnace inspections are the one thing you should call in a professional for. This should be done at least once or twice a year.

Common A/C Capacitor Failure Symptoms - posted on September 20, 2013

Capacitor failure symptoms are harder to identify without the proper tools and expertise. There may be one or multiple capacitors in your A/C. While the most popular capacitors are the types found on circuit boards, the ones associated with air conditioning will be the bigger capacitors that start and run your motors. There are several motors present in an air conditioner and heater systems:

1. Compressor Motor Run Capacitor – the most popular capacitor that fails. Frequently, these are duel capacitors, which mean that there are 2 capacitors built into one. A duel capacitor will have three terminals on the top where a single capacitor will simply have two terminals on top.
2. Outdoor Fan Motor Run Capacitor – the smaller capacitor that's part of the compressor motor capacitor. It helps start and run the outside fan that blows air through the outside coils.
3. Indoor Blower Motor Run Capacitor – like the outdoor fan motor capacitor, it is a small, single (two terminals) capacitor that will help start and run the indoor blower motor.
4. Start Capacitor – some models include an auxiliary start capacitor that helps jump start the

motors. Most are found on the compressor, but these are less common.

Capacitors either go out entirely or gradually. The decline is measured in the “capacitance” units called micro farads. When the capacitors are produced, they are labeled with their specifications capacitance and a range +/- from the design capacitance. This range is the allowable operating range, usually labeled in a percentage range. If the capacitor starts to fail, the capacitance measured will be outside of the labeled range. There is a risk of severe shock, so do not try this to troubleshoot yourself at home.

If a capacitor goes out completely, or is severely out of its operating range, it may prevent the motor from running completely. If the compressor motor is not working, then the air conditioner will not cool. If the outside fan is not working, the compressor will short cycle or stop functioning. If the indoor fan stops, then no air flow will pass through the vents.

Key Signs that Your Air Conditioner Needs Repair - posted on September 17, 2013

The air isn’t as cold as usual. This is usually a sign that the air conditioning unit is old and in need of replacement. Little or no airflow is a key sign that your compressor is seeing its last days. But if other areas of the house are getting good airflow, there could be blockage in your ductwork. This problem can often be noticed during regular air conditioning maintenance. Sometimes the A/C isn’t the issue; it’s the thermostat. A good way to tell is if one part of your home is cooler than another.

Any amount of water leakage is NOT a good sign. If it’s anywhere near or inside of the air conditioner, the condensation drainage tube may be clogged or broken. A layer of ice anywhere on the unit is also a definite problem. Freon leakage doesn’t just ruin your air conditioner; it poses a serious health risk! This colorless, odorless and potently toxic gas weighs more than air and lodges itself in the lungs. Any squeaking, squealing or grinding sounds indicate mechanical problems with the unit, possibly in the fan. Not catching the issue in time will lead to having the entire unit replaced. A pungent or burning smell means that its wire insulation has been burned away. Musty or mildewy odors is a usually a sign of mold growth and foul or rotten smells almost always mean something has died in your ductwork.

Air conditioning units often require special training and tools to be able to fix the issue(s). If you’re having trouble with your air conditioner, call All Year Cooling & Heating at 888-496-4395.

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9 Things You Need to Know About Air Conditioning - posted on September 15, 2013

Change the filter. Dirty filters kill your AC’s efficiency, so replace it once a month for central and window units, or clean them if they’re the washable type. Look for the filter’s minimum efficiency reporting value, or MERV, which ranges from 1 to 12 for home air conditioners. The higher the

number, the better filtration it provides.

Fix air leaks. Ducts can lose up to 30% of airflow. To find leaks on a window unit, light a stick of incense and hold it where the unit and the window frame meet; for central units, hold the stick near duct connections. If the smoke blows around, then a leak is present. For ductwork, use foil tape to seal small gaps and duct mastic for larger ones. For window AC units, stuff foam between the device and the window frame; taping is essential.

Use a timer. Why use the A/C to its full potential while at work? For central units, install a programmable thermostat to set higher temperature when away and cooler temperature once you're home. Newer window units have built-in timers and adjustable thermostats; make sure it matches your device's voltage. Even if you're going to be gone for awhile, do not shut off the system because the air compressor will need to work harder to cool your house later.

Insulation is key. Ducts in hot attics or crawl spaces should be wrapped to keep the cool air in. You can use spray foam, batt insulation, or rigid-foam insulation. Seal batt and rigid insulation with foil tape only. Many people make the mistake of using duct tape, which is inefficient.

Keep the compressor and condenser free of obstructions. A central A/C system's air compressor and condenser are usually located outside the house. It works best when there's about 2 feet of space in all directions, so get rid of nearby shrubbery. Build a screen to protect condensers or window units from the sun, as direct sunlight reduces their efficiency by as much as 10%.

Don't make it work so hard. It's recommended to keep blinds or shades down during the day; installing awnings is also a good solution for shielding windows that face south. Use portable and/or ceiling fans while the air conditioner is on for better circulation of cool air.

Get a professional on maintenance. The dealer who installed your central A/C should put you on a yearly cleaning schedule. Schedule a checkup before the cooling season starts and make sure it includes cleaning and inspecting coils, cleaning / replacing filters, adjusting and replacing fan belts, lubricating motors and bearings, cleaning and checking blowers and fans, inspecting controls and safeties, checking refrigerant and pressures, and verifying operating temperatures.

Don't close off rooms. Too many closed doors can cause central A/C systems to be unbalanced, resulting in less airflow in the entire house. It's better to keep doors partially or fully open instead.

Consider an upgrade. For central A/C, look for the seasonal energy-efficiency ratio, or SEER. For window units, the measure is called the energy-efficiency ratio, or EER. The standards mandate a SEER of 13 and an EER of 8, but devices with higher numbers will cost less to operate.

How to Check Your A/C Before Calling for Service - posted on September 12, 2013

It's usually feels like the hottest day when something unexpected goes wrong and your air conditioner stops working. Depending on the type of issue, getting it repaired can be within your budget, or costly if you need a replacement. These steps can save you the time, stress, and money before calling the repairman.

1. Assess the problem. Is the A/C unit not functioning at all? Is the cool air not flowing as efficiently as it should be or is it simply blowing around warm air?
2. It's not working at all; the air handler for the indoor unit / the condenser for the outdoor unit are not running. Make sure it's plugged in. Although this can be a no-brainer, there are times that the plug can be partially or completely dislodged. Make sure the circuit breakers and fuses are on and working correctly. Considerably in older homes, circuits can easily overload if the air conditioner shares a circuit with appliances such as irons, refrigerators, or microwaves. Check your thermostat to ensure that it's set to cool at the current temperature. Sometimes settings can change by accident.
3. Check your fan blower belt for excessive slack, damage, or breakage. This can cause low air flow, allowing ice to form, which causes low cooling performance. Either repair or replace the blower belt. Before restarting the A/C unit, let the ice to melt.

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