

Brought to you by AmeriSpec of Canada

## Is there anything I can do to reduce the temperature in my house during the summer if I don't have an air conditioner?



Aside from typical solutions, such as installing a window-mounted air conditioner for cooling an unbearably hot room, there are several things you can do to reduce the temperature of a home.

These include:

- Sheltering windows with awnings or shrubbery and keeping blinds closed on hot, sunny days to prevent the sun from increasing the interior temperature.
- Installing compact fluorescent lighting to produce less waste heat than incandescent/halogen lights.
- Keeping lights and computers turned off when possible.
- Cooking outdoors (i.e. use a barbecue) to avoid creating indoor heat.
- Hanging clothes outside to dry; clothes dryers generate a lot of indoor heat.

**I'm considering installing a new central air conditioner. What type should I buy?**

Look for the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating (SEER) for the unit. A high SEER indicates a more energy-efficient air conditioner. New air conditioners sold in Canada have SEERs ranging from 10 to 17, with 17 being the most energy-efficient and 10 being the least.

The types of refrigerant used in the unit should also be a consideration. The two types of refrigerant available are R-22 (Freon) and R-410A (Puron). Until recently, Freon was the only type of refrigerant available in air conditioners. However, Freon contains chlorine compounds, which if released into the atmosphere due to normal wear and tear or equipment failure, helps to destroy the ozone layer and contributes to global warming. Recent international agreements have created a plan to cease production of Freon in the next few years. This has already effectively reduced the world's supply of Freon, driving up its cost to the consumer. Puron does not contain the same ozone-depleting properties as Freon. Both Freon and Puron air conditioning systems are available. However, the benefits of installing a Puron system should be evaluated when considering repairing an older system or installing a newer system.

### What can I do to keep my central air conditioner in good working condition?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Inspect and clean/replace the blower fan filter (usually located in the return air duct of the furnace) every two months or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Vacuum or brush clean the outdoor coil to keep it clear of dirt, leaves, and grass clippings. The coil can be carefully cleaned with a garden hose after debris is vacuumed off.
- Both the blower fan and outdoor fan should be cleaned and lubricated, where applicable, when following the manufacturer's instructions.



- If there is a humidifier damper, make sure it is closed for the summer to reduce the unnecessary addition of moisture-laden air to the home.

If, after completing these suggestions, your air conditioner is performing poorly, we recommend you hire a qualified contractor to undertake a more thorough servicing. This includes checking the refrigerant level, or making electrical or mechanical checks with adjustments. As with all mechanical equipment, regular servicing by a qualified contractor in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications is recommended.

### Can a central air conditioner be tested for proper operation at any time?

Unfortunately, there are some limitations to when air conditioning systems can be tested, or damage to the compressor may result. Air conditioning systems

should not be tested when the outdoor temperature is below 18°C or has been below 18°C in the past 24 hours. It should also not be tested when the power has been on for less than 12 to 24 hours. Under these circumstances, refrigerant in the compressor can mix with lubricating oil, providing poor lubrication and potentially resulting in seizing the compressor. Given that compressors are the most expensive components to replace in an air conditioner, it is important to not operate them during the above-mentioned conditions.

### How long can I expect my central air conditioner to last?

There are many components in an air conditioner. However, most of these components (with the exception of the compressor) can often be repaired or replaced. Failure of the compressor on an older air conditioner often results in complete replacement. Given that the compressor is considered to be the "heart" of the air conditioner, the life expectancies for air conditioners are often likened to the life expectancy of the compressors. In Canada, life expectancies for compressors have generally been established to be on the order of 12 years.

To speak with a certified and trained AmeriSpec home inspector, contact us today.

1 (866) 284-6010 info@amerispec.ca

