



Staying Cool This Summer

Portland's beautiful summer weather is one of its best kept secrets. After nine months of gray skies and drizzle, many residents eagerly welcome a few months of sunny weather. The cloudless summer skies often bring temperatures that have some residents wishing to stay cooler at home. Here are some tips to save money, energy, and stay cool during our warm summer season. Remember to take advantage of alternative solutions to beat the heat. Visit [local pools](#) and [fountains](#), enjoy shade at a [park](#), and eat plenty of cool treats.



Staying cool without air conditioning

- **Block the sun.** Close and cover windows during the day to reduce solar heat absorption.
- **Pull in cooler air at night.** During the evening hours, outdoor temperatures are generally cooler than indoor temperatures. Consider opening windows to cool off rooms.
- **Use fans.** Moving air will create a more comfortable environment and uses less energy than AC. Remember fans will not actually reduce room temperature, so it's important to turn fans off when leaving a room to conserve energy.
- **Recognize inefficient appliances give off a lot of heat.** Consider upgrading to **ENERGY STAR** appliances. Remember to turn off electronic equipment (televisions, computers) when not in use.

Tips for using your air conditioner more efficiently

- **Keep all doors and windows closed when operating AC.**
- **Reduce excessive use.** Consider adjusting the unit's temperature setting a few degrees. **There is a 3 - 5% saving for each degree the thermostat is raised.**
- **Use an automatic setback or programmable thermostat.** Programmable thermostats will reduce discomfort by reducing the temperature in your home before you return from work. See sidebar.
- **Clean / change air filters regularly.** Dirty filters impede air flow, reduce efficiency, and lower air quality. Check filters on room AC units every couple of months during the operational season.
- **Professionally tune a central AC every 2-3 years.** Preventative maintenance plays an important roll in the efficiency of your system. Refrigerant may need recharging and a trained eye may notice leaky ducts and areas that may benefit from additional installation. These corrections may improve system efficiency by 10-20%.
- **Window units must be properly sized.** If the window is too big, the unit will cycle on and off too often, wasting energy. If the window is too small, the unit will not cool well.

Turn AC Off While Away

A common misconception when using air conditioners is that a unit works harder to cool a warm home back to a comfortable temperature.

Heat naturally flows into cooler spaces. A higher interior temperature actually slows the flow of outdoor heat into a home. An air conditioner will use less energy cooling a warm home than it would if left running throughout the day.

Operate your AC unit only when occupants are home. It will conserve energy and money.