

Home HVAC Seasonal Maintenance Checklist

26 quick checks that prevent the most common no-heat and no-cool breakdowns.

EVERY MONTH

- ☐ **Check the air filter** — hold it up to a light; if you can't see light through it, replace it.
- ☐ Keep every supply and return vent open and clear of rugs, drapes and furniture.
- ☐ Listen for new rattles, buzzing or grinding when the system kicks on.
- ☐ **Watch your energy bill** — a sudden jump with no weather change often means a struggling system.

SPRING: COOLING SEASON PREP

- ☐ **Test the AC on the first mild day** — don't discover a problem during the first heat wave.
- ☐ Replace the air filter before heavy summer use begins.
- ☐ **Flush the condensate drain line** with a cup of white vinegar to prevent clogs and water damage.
- ☐ Check the refrigerant lines for ice — icing usually means low refrigerant, which needs a pro.
- ☐ Book a professional AC tune-up; a clean coil alone can cut cooling costs noticeably.

FALL: HEATING SEASON PREP

- ☐ Run the heat for ten minutes before the first cold night — the burning-dust smell should clear quickly.
- ☐ **Test carbon monoxide detectors** and put fresh batteries in every one.
- ☐ Check the burner flame: steady blue is healthy; flickering yellow means shut it down and call a pro.
- ☐ Keep a three-foot clear zone around the furnace — no boxes, paint cans or storage.
- ☐ Schedule a furnace tune-up that includes a heat-exchanger and CO safety check.

OUTDOOR UNIT CARE

- ☐ **Clear two feet around the condenser** — trim shrubs, pull weeds, rake out leaves.
- ☐ Rinse the condenser fins gently with a garden hose (power off at the disconnect first).
- ☐ Check that the unit sits level on its pad; a tilting unit strains the compressor.
- ☐ In fall, keep the top clear of leaves but don't wrap the unit tightly — trapped moisture causes rust.

AIRFLOW & DUCTWORK

- ☐ Feel for steady airflow at every register; one weak room often points to a duct leak.
- ☐ **Vacuum supply and return grilles** — dust buildup chokes airflow and feeds allergies.
- ☐ Compare room temperatures — more than a few degrees' difference is worth investigating.
- ☐ Look for crushed or disconnected flex duct anywhere you can see it: attic, crawlspace, basement.

KNOW YOUR SYSTEM

- ☐ **Know your shutoffs:** the thermostat, the furnace power switch, and the AC breaker.
- ☐ Write the system's age and model number inside a kitchen cabinet door for quick reference.
- ☐ Short cycling — on and off every few minutes — is never normal; call before parts wear out.
- ☐ **If your system is 12+ years old**, get a replacement estimate now, not during a July breakdown.

Safety first: if you smell gas or a CO alarm sounds, leave the house immediately and call your gas utility's emergency line from outside — before you call anyone else, including us.