

# IMPORTANT AC INFORMATION FOR TENANTS

\*Air filters get covered in dust and debris. If you don't change them regularly, the caked dirt will block airflow. This, in turn, will cause your AC unit to work harder (and drive up your energy bill) without really cooling down your home. How often you need to change your air filters depends on how many people live in your home & how clean you keep it, whether you have any pets, whether you have any allergies, and which type of air filters you use (**DO NOT USE REUSABLE FILTERS IN CENTRAL SYSTEMS**). Check them once a month. If they look dirty, replace them.

\*When air filters are not replaced or cleaned out it adds strain upon the AC because it is now more restrictive than before. This means less air gets through the filter and less air is conditioned. If this happens, it also causes the evaporator coils to ice up while the system overheats.

The evaporator coils are hollow tubes through which refrigerant flows. Once the refrigerant reaches the evaporator coils, the coils grow cold so that the indoor air supply that passes over them are cooled before returning into your home. Something as simple as a dirty filter can stop this process because less room temperature air passes over the coils which in turn ice up.

\*Likewise, poor air flow due to dirty filters encourages the system to overheat and shut down. This is because a central air system needs a heat source to function and restricted air flow means the same amount of energy is used for less and less air. Filters that are not replaced (or cleaned in window/wall units) are the number one reason for system shut-downs. A clogged drain pan is the number two reason for system shut-downs; this can be avoided by adding ¼ cup vinegar once a month to drain line. If you find the smell of vinegar foul, you can also use peroxide. **DO NOT USE BLEACH.**

\*Each central air system works to cool air by 15 to 20 degrees at a time. As an example, if the indoor air temperature is at 80 degrees, the AC system takes that supply of air and subtracts 15 to 20 degrees of heat before releasing it back into the home air supply. Because it mixes with the other 80 degree air that has not been conditioned yet, the air you feel will be cooler but not necessarily the temperature that you set on your thermostat. It takes time for the indoor air to reach temperature equilibrium. Unfortunately, even if the air conditioning never turns off, it may take hours to lower indoor room temperature (as a whole) from 88 degrees to 75 degrees.

\*On most days, a 20 degree temperature drop is perfectly fine and your home will stay right around the temperature at which you set your thermostat. On extremely hot days, however, your air conditioner might not be able to cool down your home to its normal temperature. If it's 100 degrees outside, for example, your air conditioner might only be capable of cooling your home down to 80 degrees (although likely a bit lower since your indoor return air is usually cooler than the air outside).

\*The worst thing you can do on an extremely hot day is to set your thermostat temperature even lower than usual in an attempt to make your home cooler. All this will do is force your air conditioner to work non-stop and will greatly increase the likelihood of something going wrong.

The longer your air conditioner runs, the higher your electric bill will be. The lower you set your thermostat, the longer your air conditioner will run and the higher your electric will be.

\*The Energy Commission recommends that homeowners set their thermostat to 78 degrees when they're home and 85 degrees when they're away from home during the summer. Note that this is a better strategy than turning off your air conditioner on 100-degree days – so that you don't return home to indoor air that feels like a sauna, and so that your air conditioner won't have to run as long to cool your home upon your return.

\*Close your window treatments during the day when the sun is out.

\*Turn your ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction during the warmer months. Doing so will create a literal wind-chill effect that should allow you to set your thermostat about 4 degrees higher than usual -- and you won't feel one bit warmer.

\*For the same reason, place table and floor fans in strategic places, such as to cool down the kitchen while you're cooking.

\*Make good use of kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans to force heat and humidity to dissipate in a hurry.

\*Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated. **ANY QUESTIONS? ASK YOUR PROPERTY MANAGER!**