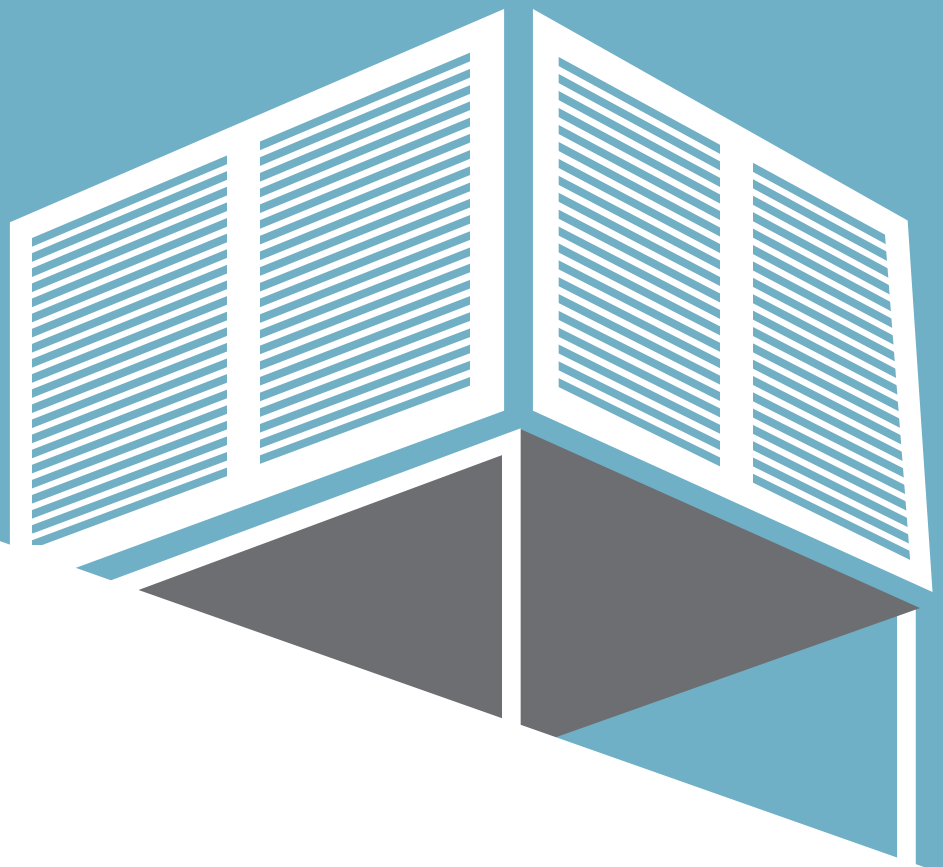


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# HVAC Home Service Plan

Saving Money and Eliminating Hassles

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All across the USA, homes are being kept cool or warm by properly maintained heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment. A smooth-running HVAC system with regular maintenance keeps the right temperature in homes and helps homeowners avoid unexpected breakdowns and expensive parts replacement.

**In the Phoenix metro area, temperature increases and dips are common occurrences. Temperature averages can get as high as 106° F in July and as low as 45° F in January.**

Many homeowners choose to outsource HVAC service in exchange for a monthly or annual fee. An HVAC home service plan offers a homeowner peace of mind in their house.

In the [Phoenix metro area](#), temperature increases and dips are common occurrences. Temperature averages can get as high as 106° F in July and as low as 45° F in January, according to the National Weather Service. That's quite a spread, though not too cold. Conditions vary greatly throughout the year, emphasizing the need for efficient home cooling and heating systems.

When it comes to HVAC service maintenance plans, quality and responsiveness are what often sets one apart from the other. Homeowners may be asked to purchase an HVAC service agreement during a service call. At the time of an equipment breakdown, that might not be the best time to make a decision. Responsible homeowners should research both the basic elements and added features of an HVAC plan before purchasing one.

## Air Conditioners and Breakdowns

An air conditioner is a sophisticated system of components. Working together, the components cool an entire home. This is done by drawing heat to the outside, and transferring the energy to the outside. The air inside the home is replaced with cooler air. Air conditioning systems come in many shapes and forms, including split system heat pumps, split systems with a gas furnace, package heat pumps and package gas/electric units. Compressors, fans, evaporators, and liquid refrigerant facilitate the heat exchange. In the AZ heat, these parts work hard over long periods of time. At that rate, without proper maintenance, the air conditioning system may face break down more quickly than in cooler locations.

A broken air conditioner during an Arizona summer is not only inconvenient, but potentially dangerous for the elderly or pets, if there's no relief from extreme heat. On top of that, service technicians are in high demand during such emergency conditions, making scheduling difficult. Customers with HVAC service agreements are often given preference for ongoing services. These include routine maintenance at high load times, which can find and fix small issues.

## What are HVAC Service Agreements?

HVAC service agreements provide homeowners a set fee for various services from a HVAC service company. It also guarantees the company's services will be available when needed. Services may include maintenance, checkups, and tune-ups. More inclusive agreements cover parts replacement or service on other problems when they're found. Emergency calls may also be covered.

These agreements may also guarantee scheduled maintenance. Your HVAC service firm may schedule a visit in the spring, to get you ready for the hot summer, or the late fall to prepare for winter. In some cases, you might be eligible for a discount on repairs.

## Key Benefits of a Home HVAC Maintenance Plan

Peace of mind is the most obvious benefit for homeowners with a home [HVAC service plan](#). In this ongoing process, dirty filters are changed and minor repairs and cleaning boost a system's efficiency. That translates into energy cost savings. Ignoring smaller problems with your HVAC system can result in more costly repairs and possible larger utility bills. Periodic checks can identify smaller issues such as weak capacitors or dirty coils that cause more strenuous operation and eventually lead to larger repairs.

Additional benefits of signing a maintenance/service agreement include:

- **Bi-annual full system check-ups:** Regular checks are guaranteed at set time intervals. These are included in the plan and the company will remind you when it's time, eliminating the need to remember when to have your air conditioner looked at.
- **Peak equipment performance:** Inspections for dirty filters, clogged lines, lagging efficiency, etc. enable technicians to

identify if something needs to be fixed. Studies have proven your conditioning system lasts longer with regular maintenance. The equipment will also operate at its top performance allowing not just highest possible efficiency but also producing the most comfort in the home.

- **Priority service:** If you're calling for service, in most cases the company will send out a technician to you more quickly than other customers who haven't purchased a maintenance program. This is a way for a company to prioritize, taking into account customers needs as well as customer satisfaction.
- **Discount pricing:** Companies often provide home service plan holders with discounts on parts and labor. Air conditioning, heating, and plumbing rewards programs may reinforce and standardize with these discounts so you save on future repairs.
- **Peace of mind:** An A/C service plan can make you feel more at ease because there's no guesswork as to whether there's a problem. Subtle but noticeable differences in performance don't have to leave you wondering either.
- **Scheduling:** The HVAC company keeps a schedule of who needs maintenance when, and will adapt to the customer's

schedule. They will call when the scheduled time is approaching, and when the technician is in route.

[The HVAC home service maintenance plan](#) from Isley's is an example of a high-quality service agreement designed to save money and eliminate hassles. Qualified, friendly and personable technicians are only the beginning. The Isley's family-owned-and-operated company guarantees 24/7 emergency service for those with an HVAC service plan. The company also accommodates to customers' schedules at other times. With Isley's TLC maintenance plans, customers are not charged for individual trips and receive a 10% discount on repairs.

**The HVAC home service maintenance plan from Isley's is an example of a high-quality service agreement designed to save money and eliminate hassles.**

## HVAC Preventative Maintenance Checklist

Quality HVAC service firms will give you a checklist of services, features and basic jobs involved in an ongoing maintenance agreement. Homeowners should be familiar with some of these points, but seeing a full checklist (like the one below) will ensure a worthwhile maintenance or service agreement.

A professional technician should run through each item on the list before each hot or cold season. Also be sure they hold the appropriate credentials to inspect, service, and install air conditioning/heating equipment. Tips on running the air conditioning so that operating life and time between breakdowns are extended are listed below.

### Indoor

- For an older air conditioner model:
  - Lubricate the motor.
  - Inspect the fan belt; replace if necessary.
- Conduct an inspection on the blower assembly, and its housing, wheel, and motor. Clean the assembly thoroughly if it is dirty.
- Check whether debris or lint is in the combustion blower housing. Clean any material out if it is there.
- Inspect the A/C's evaporator coil, condensate drain lines, and drain pan; remove any clogs or dirt if these are found.
- If a gas furnace is connected to the system, inspect for gas leaks.
- Inspect the entire ignition system, plus the safety controls for normal sequence of operation. Cleaning or adjustment may be required.
- Inspect, clean, or adjust the burner assembly.
- Conduct an inspection of the heat exchanger system and any components related to heating.
- Check the flue system is properly secured to the furnace. Repair any corrosion or dislocated segments. If the damage is extensive, replace the entire flue system.
- Make sure the thermostat and control components, plus the wiring, all work together properly and in good condition.

11. Clean up the air filters. If they are in disrepair, replace them immediately.
12. Conduct a thorough inspection of the ductwork. Throughout the conditioned airflow system, look carefully for leaks, which should be fixed immediately to eliminate any inefficiencies.

Additionally, there are several checks, which should be performed while the HVAC system is operating.

1. Monitor the system as it starts up. The starting characteristics indicate if it is operating properly or if there are early signs of upcoming problems.
2. Make sure there are no unusual sounds, and listen carefully for abnormal noises coming from the HVAC system.
3. If there are unusual odors during operation, check carefully for their source.
4. Measure a few parameters such as outdoor dry bulb temperature, the indoor dry and wet bulb temperatures, and the high/low side system pressures.
5. Check that the air conditioner and/ or the heat pump has the manufacturer's recommended amount of refrigerant.

6. Check the line and manifold gas pressure in the gas furnace. Adjustments must be made if these parameters are out of normal range.
7. Measure the temperature rise while the system is turned on. If it is not exactly normal, try adjusting the airflow.
8. Ensure that the vent system is operating at normal parameters.
9. Measure the line and load voltage/amps. These should also be in the normal range if the system is running properly.
10. Make sure the entire HVAC system is operating according to the specifications listed by the manufacturer.
11. Based on the findings, draft a system operation report. Include any necessary repairs or replacements in this document.

### Outdoor

1. Check whether there is any dirt, debris, or leaves inside the chassis. If there are make sure these are cleaned away.

2. Check the refrigerant level. If this inspection finds it is lower or higher than normal, make the necessary adjustments.
3. Inspect the base pan. If the drain openings are restricted or blocked, clean out anything that is in the way.
4. Check the outdoor coil and cabinet of the unit. Clean the coil or any other parts that are dirty.
5. Inspect for wear/damage of the fan motor or fan blades. Damaged or extremely worn parts should be replaced.
6. Be sure the fan motor on older models are properly lubricated. If need be, lubricate these components.
7. Inspect the outdoor control box, relays, wiring, and connections.
8. Check for any damage/wear to circuit boards, contactors, relays, and capacitors within the control assembly. Repeat this for heat pump components, all accessories, and electrical parts.
9. Conduct an inspection on the compressor and its connecting refrigerant tubing for damage or chafing.

## Operational Checklist

Remember that professional HVAC inspectors are not there all the time. The couple of times a year they check the system only provides a snapshot of the immediate operation. How you operate and maintain the system all year long can impact its reliability and longevity. To do this, here are hands-on tips that can save you money and eliminate hassles down the road.

**How you operate and maintain the system all year long can impact its reliability and longevity.**

1. The thermostat settings can be adjusted to maintain a constant comfort level. It is best not to adjust the temperature setting higher or lower than what is comfortable; otherwise you're not getting the best value for your buck.
2. Although not part of your heating/cooling system, check the attic. It should be properly ventilated and have adequate insulation ([R-38 for our region](#)). Otherwise heat can build up in the attic or infiltrate into the home without proper attic ventilation and

attic insulation. Improvements such as adding attic vents or enlarging existing vents can alleviate any issues related to poor ventilation or excess heat. Adding adequate insulation in the attic will help keep your home more comfortable and keep your utility bills lower.

3. During new builds or renovations, purchase roof shingles with lighter colors. These will serve to reflect the sun's heat back into the atmosphere rather than it being absorbed into your house.
4. If the weather is not too hot or cold, leave the air conditioner off.
5. Block out sunlight with blinds or drapes during the parts of the day with the most heat.
6. If you have windows exposed to direct sunlight, awnings can help deflect heat away.
7. Use exhaust fans for the kitchen and bath, but not longer than you have to. Running the exhaust also blows your cold air right out the roof vent.
8. Keep heat-producing items, like lamps and HD TVs, away from thermostat locations, especially underneath them. Such equipment can actually fool the

system into thinking the room is warmer than it really is; many homes are overcooled this way.

These tips are things you can do throughout the year. Aside from convenience, comfort, and the well-being of your HVAC system, these each help increase efficiency and save money.

## Making A/C Choices

Your due diligence is important in choosing an air conditioning system, but it's just as important to select the right company that will provide quality service, maintenance, and the right service plan. Avoiding headaches down the road starts with this choice. In this respect, researching and planning can go a long way.

**The proper fit for your home** – A suitable air conditioner should not be too big or too small for your home. Its capacity should be based on several factors including the interior square footage. A heat load calculation should be performed to determine the proper unit capacity. Service techs should research the house, and the climate conditions in the location. Air ducts should be checked for air configuration and condition. With this information, technicians can determine the exact capacity and type of



air conditioning system needed. Identifying necessary repairs or realignments to ductwork can increase efficiency and impact the choice of system, as well.

**Don't oversize the A/C** – Choosing the correct size of air conditioner system for a home is a pretty big deal. Homeowners in Arizona often get air conditioners that are larger than necessary. To understand [air conditioner sizing](#), the industry describes cooling power as “tons of refrigeration.” For homes, AC systems are rated from 1 to 5 tons. The “ton” of air conditioning is equal to 12,000 BTU's per ton. One BTU is the amount of heat that it takes to heat one

**Avoiding headaches down the road starts with the company and the equipment that you choose.**

pound of water one degree. If the A/C system is oversized, it uses more energy than is necessary. The risk of breakdowns increases, while more energy is used. An oversized unit won't dehumidify the air in the home, either. Heat load calculations incorporate the size, shape, and orientation of homes, window areas, climate, and how many people live there, among other metrics. Professional A/C technicians can therefore find the right sized air conditioner for your home.

### **Realize all HVAC parts work together** –

The compressor, condenser, furnace, air handler, and outside A/C all work together. Installing just one new component, such as replacing the outdoor condenser, and attempting to match it with the older indoor air handler, increases the risk of potential problems because of a mismatched system. This mismatch, in turn, creates a system that costs more to operate. Many of today's products come with promises of efficiency but choosing the wrong item won't satisfy these guarantees.

**Technician Advice** – Ask the pros at your [professional HVAC company](#) for suggestions on new heating and cooling systems that make sense for your home, like new TRANE air-efficiency systems and others. Your local air conditioning pros often hear about manufacturers' deals and warranties early on.

**Research Service Companies** – Researching a company is much more simple with the Internet. Don't only go by the company's claims; every business website will obviously put its best foot forward for its products and services. Look at other reviews from people at Reliable sites such as Yelp, Google Reviews, Customer Lobby or the Better Business Bureau and read about products, services, and customer satisfaction from outside sources. Homeowners can also learn by asking people who've already worked with

service firms, especially relating to specific brands and unit sizes they've used.

**Go Beyond Price** – The lowest number may seem desirable, but there are other things to consider. These include guarantees, reputation, a thorough look at ducts, filtration systems, and more. Parts and labor, while increasing what you pay, may cover repairs and maintenance for many years, resulting in true savings down the road.

**Find a Top-Notch Service Plan** – Look for providers with industry qualifications and certifications. [NATE Certified technicians](#) are the ones to look for, as are Master Heat Pump technicians. It's a good idea to look into what a maintenance check or air conditioning tune-up includes. As a rule of thumb, the more features included, the better. Every part needs to work properly for the system to be at top efficiency.

For new homeowners, an HVAC service plan should be part of your HVAC system purchase, or new home purchase.

To recap the top points talked about above: Customers who purchase these plans receive priority service, which is great for scheduling routine maintenance, or unexpected breakdowns. They save money on these visits in

the long run, if there's an emergency and a person needs service at the last minute. And your home's air conditioning can be kept at peak performance. Routine checks can find problems while they are small, eliminating breakdowns and discomfort, maintaining energy efficiency, and avoiding high expenses later on.

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*For more information on getting ahead of your home's heating and air conditioning plans, look to the pros at Isley's Inc., servicing the Phoenix-area communities of Gilbert, Chandler, Fountain Hills, Glendale, Mesa, Tempe, Phoenix, Scottsdale and others. Click to <http://isleys.com/>*

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