

THE TRUTH ABOUT HIGH EFFICIENCY AIR CONDITIONING EQUIPMENT

Summer time is approaching with all of its heat, humidity, and a/c breakdowns. Many of you will face the decision of repairing or replacing equipment that is not performing well or not working at all. Considering initial cost only, it is always cheaper to repair your equipment than replace it. Even when you add in the cost of operation it still may be cheaper to repair than replace. That said, if you do decide to replace your equipment you will have several efficiencies to choose from. The least efficient equipment available today is 10 SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating) and other SEER ratings are available up to 18 SEER.

First Rule: High efficiency air conditioning does not cool better it just uses less electricity and may not cool as well as your existing equipment.

Second Rule: To achieve the rated efficiency you usually need to replace your furnace / air handler, evaporator coil, and freon line set. Just changing the condenser will not achieve the rated efficiency.

Third Rule: Many manufactures use numbers like 10, 12, ...14 to identify their products. These numbers do not always correlate to SEER and the yellow tag on the equipment may relate to the SEER rating of that line and not that particular piece of equipment. The only sure way to determine the SEER rating of the equipment you are buying is to have your contractor show you the ARI SEER manual.

Fourth Rule: High SEER rated equipment does not cool as well as lower SEER Rated equipment. Higher SEER rated condensers do not do as good a job of removing humidity as lower SEER Rated equipment. Installing a furnace / air handler with a variable speed blower improves the humidity removal ability of your system.

Last Rule: Higher SEER ratings mean more complexity, more things to break, and fewer people qualified to work on them. Many High SEER installations are not done correctly because few installations are done each year.

So what is a person to do? You will get the most bang for your buck by purchasing the least efficient equipment from an honest, well-established dealer. If you insist on purchasing higher SEER rated equipment contact the manufacturer's distributor and request that they have a tech rep review your proposal and act as supervisor for your installation.