

Time to replace your HVAC system?

So much of the physical comfort you feel in your home relies on your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. From cooling you down in the summer to heating you up in the winter, the systems are some of the most important to keep tabs on, they not only keep you comfortable, they also keep the indoor environment free from extreme temperature fluctuations that can lead to structural damage.

The average life span of central air conditioning system is 12- to 15- years if it is properly installed and maintained. Heat pumps can about 14 years recommended when you follow the recommended maintenance plan. Newer units manufactured in recent years are expected to last even longer. So how do you know when your system just needs a little tune-up and when it's time to replace it? The U.S. Department of Energy offers the following red flags:

Some rooms in your home are too hot or too cold.

Improper equipment operation, duct problems or inadequate insulation could be the cause.

Your equipment needs frequent repairs and your energy bills are going up.

Your cooling or heating equipment may have become less efficient.

Your home has humidity problems.

Poor equipment operation, inadequate equipment, and leaky ductwork can cause the air to be too dry in the winter or too humid in the summer.

Your heating or cooling system is noisy.

You could have an undersized duct system or a problem with the indoor coil of your cooling equipment.

Your heat pump or air conditioner is more than 10 years old.

Consider replacing it with a unit that has earned the ENERGY STAR label. Installed correctly, these high-efficiency units can save up to 20 percent on heating and cooling costs.

Your furnace or boiler is more than 15 years old.

Consider replacing with an ENERGY STAR qualified furnace, which is 15% more efficient than a conventional furnace. If you have a boiler, consider replacing with an ENERGY STAR qualified boiler that is 5% more efficient than a new, standard model.