

COOL SOLUTIONS from COOL DAVIS



This planning guide is one in a series that offers Cool Solutions for home heating and cooling as well as energy efficiency. The full series of documents will be available on the Cool Davis website. This document is provided as general guidance and is not intended to be legal, financial, or technical advice.

Help! My Heating and Cooling System Is Down!

If you have a heating or cooling emergency, you may feel like you don't have a lot of options. You may also decide it's not an emergency and a solution can wait. Either way, an HVAC professional can diagnose your system, identify problems, and help you understand your options. When faced with a problem, you could:

1. Ignore small problems

Ignoring small problems like loud rattling noises or ineffective operation is tempting, especially if fixing or replacing the unit is likely to be more expensive than you can afford at the moment. However, delaying may be more expensive in the long run. At a minimum, a free estimate from an HVAC service provider can help you decide if ignoring the problem is acceptable, or actually a really bad idea.

2. Do a band-aid repair

Doing a band-aid repair may get you through a season or longer. This buys you some time and allows you to start planning ahead and saving for a more expensive repair or replacement. Unfortunately, not all breakdowns can be fixed easily.

3. Do a thorough repair

If your heating and cooling system is in relatively good condition, a thorough repair might be a good option if you're not ready to invest in a new system. Make sure your HVAC professional checks your duct system for leaks (and repairs them), even if you're not repairing or replacing the unit.

Be sure to ask your HVAC professional for:

- Comparative cost estimates of a thorough repair versus a replacement.
- How long the system repair will last compared to the cost of replacing the system.
- The annual energy costs of the different options.

4. Replace the unit

If your system is old (and ready to fail), it might be time to replace it. See our *Cool Davis Home Heating and Cooling: Working with Contractors* Planning Guide for detailed information.

5. Avoid problems by planning ahead

Heating and cooling system repair and replacement is a big investment. A new system will likely last for about 20 years. Despite the cost and complexity of fixing or replacing, most people ignore their heating and cooling systems until a problem occurs. Thinking about it now and planning ahead can save you headaches in the future.

No matter what you decide or what situation you find yourself in, investing some time in exploring your options is always a good idea. Don't barrel forward just because you're hot or cold. If you have family members with health issues, look into temporary shelter with friends or family or invest in a hotel room. Talk to your employer about taking a day or two off work to meet with contractors.

Remember to consider home energy efficiency improvements when thinking about repairing or replacing your HVAC system. While the advice and expertise of contractors can be invaluable, only you can decide how to proceed.

7 Home Energy Efficiency Wins

- Duct sealing
- Attic and wall insulation
- Sealing attic, ceiling and wall penetrations
- Sealing exterior walls, roof, skylights, and doors)
- Window replacement and/or sealing
- New ceiling fans, whole house fan, attic fans
- Smart thermostats

Other Cool Solutions Home Heating and Cooling Planning Guides

- Understanding Home Heating and Cooling
- Make a Home Heating and Cooling Plan ... Now
- Help! My HVAC System Is Down!
- Home Comfort and Health Issues
- Working with Contractors
- Ways to Save, Ways to Pay for Home Energy Improvements
- Home Heating and Cooling Commonly Used Terms

What is Cool Davis?

Cool Davis is a local non-profit organization dedicated to helping Davis residents and businesses adopt more sustainable practices and reduce their greenhouse emissions. Cool Davis has partnered with the city since 2010 to offer resources, host events, and provide outreach and educational experiences for Davis residents.

To learn more about other Cool Davis projects related to energy, transportation, and consumption of goods and services, visit us at www.cooldavis.org.

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