



MENU

Equipment Connection

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9 AIR CONDITIONING MAINTENANCE TIPS TO PREVENT COSTLY BREAKDOWNS

By Hartford Steam Boiler in Business, Equipment Care

Appropriate maintenance at the beginning of the cooling season is one of the best ways to prevent an air conditioning breakdown. Prevention is the key to avoiding an air conditioning emergency in the height of summer. Here are nine maintenance tips that can help you avoid a costly air conditioning repair:

- **Energize the crankcase heater.** The crankcase heater is usually a strap-on heater strip that's attached to the bottom half of the compressor. At the beginning of the summer, energize the heater for at least 8 hours before starting up the compressor. You can check to see if it is energized with an ammeter or you can feel for heat with the back of your hand. Energizing the heater will minimize refrigerant getting into the oil.
- **Clean outside coils twice per year.** Dirt buildup can cause the machinery to work harder. The outside coils should be cleaned before start-up, and then again before the peak of the cooling season.
- **Inspect the compressor motor starter.** Replace electrical contacts that are corroded or deteriorating. Don't wait until they fail on a hot summer day when service companies are busiest!
- **Check/ replace moisture filters.** If the air conditioner's indicator shows moisture in the system, have a serviceman vacuum the system and install new filters and driers. Be sure to identify the source of the moisture, which could be a leak.

- **Check refrigerant charge.** If the system has ever been serviced for low refrigerant, it's likely to need continuous upkeep. Make sure all leaks have been identified and repaired.
- **Check for leaks.** Leaks can not only affect the operation of the air conditioner, but they are harmful to the environment. Additives are available for refrigerant to make leaks easier to detect.
- **Clean evaporators.** Make sure air flow is not obstructed and that the air filters are changed regularly.
- **Protect electrical equipment.** Install surge-protection. Also, install a programmable thermostat to delay the compressor from restarting immediately after turning off, which can lead to burning out.
- **Familiarize yourself with normal operating conditions of the system.** Any change in normal operation is a warning sign. Call a technician if there are any changes in noise/ vibration, odor, oil/ water spots, temperature, speed, or pressure.

Taking the time to implement a preventative maintenance program will aid in avoiding air conditioning catastrophes. In addition, it will help lengthen the life of the system and keep it running as efficiently as possible. For an indepth look at each of these steps, you can [review this Locomotive article](#).

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