

# LIVING IN COMFORT

SPRING 2015

**APPEL**  
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING  
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## The thermostat of the future...and present!

There are several misconceptions out there about Wi-Fi thermostats: they're expensive, difficult to use, and make your home less secure. The fact of the matter is that Wi-Fi thermostats are the future of home temperature control.

Wi-Fi thermostats have been around for more than a decade, and while some of these concerns may have been true at one point, they have been rendered moot in the last few years by major improvements in technology. Not only are these thermostats safe, easy to use, and relatively inexpensive (many are about the same price as standard digital thermostats), there is no simpler way to save money and energy than by installing a Wi-Fi thermostat in your home. Just by using the preset schedules on many of the models, you could save up to 30% in energy costs, per year!

With most Wi-Fi thermostats, you can control your home's climate from an app on your smartphone or computer, and can set multiple different schedules--one for every day of the week, if you wish. Unexpectedly working late at the office one night? With the app, you can adjust your home's climate remotely, so the heat or air conditioning doesn't kick on at inconvenient moments and waste precious energy. Many Wi-Fi thermostats will also send you alerts via email and text if anything in your home goes awry, making this a perfect option for snowbirds who wish to keep an eye on things while they're away for the winter.

Installing a Wi-Fi thermostat is typically quick and painless, and the majority of them work with most combined heating and cooling systems. In addition, with today's technology, Wi-Fi thermostats are safer than earlier versions, and are just as secure as your home's Wi-Fi network. Therefore, with proper encryption and a strong password, you can create a secure environment for your home.

Experts say that Wi-Fi thermostats will outsell standard digital thermostats in the next five years. Don't get left behind! Contact us today to see how we can set you up with the peace of mind of a Wi-Fi thermostat.



## Don't Miss These Rebates

Taking steps to save energy in your home can also save you big bucks--and not just on your monthly utility bills. Check out these energy efficiency rebate programs offered by the IRS and your local utilities companies:

### IRS

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act adopted in October 2008 allows for a **30% tax credit** for costs associated with ENERGY STAR qualified geothermal heat pumps, as noted in section 25D of the Internal Revenue Code. The credit applies to geothermal equipment placed in service through December 31, 2016.

### Vectren

**\$100 rebate** on smart Wi-Fi programmable thermostat. Rebate available on existing homes only, new construction not eligible.

**\$250 rebate** on 95% AFUE furnaces.

### Citizens

**\$100 rebate** on smart Wi-Fi programmable thermostat. Rebate available on existing homes only, new construction not eligible.

**\$250 rebate** on 95% AFUE furnaces.



## What should you look for in a maintenance plan?

One of the best things you can do for your heating and cooling system is to have it serviced regularly. Yes, we've discussed this before, but it really is that important. Having an experienced, professional technician out to look at your unit, to change filters and check to make sure everything is functioning properly, could end up saving you LOTS of money in costly repairs or, if worse comes to worst, a whole new system.

So, what exactly is a maintenance plan (or service contract, as it's sometimes called)? In its simplest form, it is an agreement between you and your HVAC service provider wherein you pay a set fee, and they guarantee on-going service in the form of check ups and tune ups for your unit. Different plans ensure different levels of service and perks, so it's important to know exactly what you're paying for before you sign anything.

Why is it beneficial? Signing up for a maintenance plan means you're less likely to put off scheduling an annual tune up for your unit. Regular maintenance helps to ensure you get the longest life and the highest efficiency out of your home's system. By changing the filters, and inspecting and cleaning the unit, the technicians can help to ensure everything is in top running form. They can also help identify and fix any small problems before they grow large enough to damage the system and unnecessarily cost you money.

It's important to do your research when looking for a maintenance plan for your heating and cooling system. You may want to find out what the typical cost for routine maintenance is for your unit and see if the cost of a service contract is comparable. And always be sure to choose a company you trust, which is sure to offer you honest, reliable work.

Our Platinum Maintenance Plan is convenient, thorough, and inexpensive. With several discounts, including multi-year and off-season plans, regular maintenance of your HVAC system could cost you as little as \$65 per visit. Have a look at our website, [www.appelheat.com](http://www.appelheat.com), for a list of services our maintenance plans offer, or give us a call to see how we can save your family money and ensure peace of mind.

## Keeping your home safe over summer vacation

Ever heard the phrase "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure?" Following these simple pre-vacation procedures can save you heartache, on the off-chance something goes wrong while you're away on summer break:

- The best thing you can do is get someone you know to stay at your house while you're gone, or to check in on it daily. They can bring in mail and newspapers, and keep up with the garbage collection and lawn maintenance to make it seem like you're home. And if anything does go wrong, they'll be around to take care of business. Be sure to give these helpers your contact info and itinerary, in case of any emergencies. (And maybe bake them some cookies as a thank you.)
- It can be exciting to tell everyone you know about your exotic travel plans, but make sure you don't go into detail while in public places. And don't broadcast the news over social media-- you can upload all your vacation pics when you get back.
- Leave curtains and blinds just as you would when you're at home. Not only do perpetually closed curtains tip off burglars to your absence, they also prevent neighbors and police from checking for unusual activity inside your house.
- Get a light switch timer to turn on and off your interior lights at appropriate times of day. This will save you money on your electricity bill and make it seem as if everyone is home.
- To save energy and help protect your home from damage due to power surges, unplug any appliances that don't need to be running while you're gone.
- Clean out your gutters before you leave to ensure proper drainage in case of severe rain. You may also want to shut your water main off or install a warning system that will shut off your main valve if a leak is detected. Coming home to a flooded basement is a huge bummer.
- While you're at it, have a technician out to check your air conditioner for potential leaks or problems. You might also consider installing a Wi-Fi thermostat to monitor your home's moisture levels remotely and prevent mold from growing in damp areas of the house.

Once you've done everything to ensure the security of your home, you're free to enjoy that much needed R and R. Happy traveling!

# New rules for air conditioning and refrigerant and what it means for you

We're pretty used to our creature comforts here in the US, and air conditioning has become more of an expectation than a luxury. In fact, around 85% of homes in America have air conditioning. Unfortunately, most air conditioning units (and refrigerators) use chemicals that are extremely harmful to our environment.

In early March of 2015, as part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan, the Environmental Protection Agency approved an expanded list of more climate-friendly refrigerants for air conditioners and refrigerators. Why was this necessary? At the moment, most refrigerants are made up of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which emit heat-trapping gases during manufacture, leakage, or disposal. While HFCs are much safer for the ozone than their predecessor R22 (commonly known by the brand name Freon), they are still 10,000 times as potent as carbon dioxide and are quite damaging to the planet.

The five new chemicals approved by the EPA--ethane, isobutane, propane, hydrocarbon blend R-441A, and difluoromethane (HFC)-32--pose much less of a threat to the environment. For comparison purposes, the global warming potential (GWP) of these newly approved chemicals range from 3 to 675 GWPs, as opposed to 1400 to 4000 GWPs in the older compounds they will replace.

What does this mean for you? Not much...at least, not at the moment. These changes mostly affect the manufacturing side of the HVACR industry, and prices for the consumer are not expected to increase much, if at all. If you are concerned about this issue, or wish to learn about replacing your current refrigerant with a cleaner alternative, talk to an HVACR technician to find out more about your options.

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## Do you suffer from spring allergies? Yoga might help!

April showers bring May...pollen. Some studies show that integrating yoga into your daily routine has the potential to bolster your immune system and fend off allergens. So, if spring has you wheezing and sneezing, you may want to give these poses a try!

- Shoulder Stands and Inversions can help open nasal passages and improve drainage. For a more gentle option, try the Legs Up the Wall variation: lie on your back on the floor so that the backs of your legs rest against the wall. Your body should be in approximately a 90° angle. You may wish to place a bolster or folded blankets under your lower back for added support.
- Supported Backbends open the chest and increase lung capacity, which can help to soothe coughs and wheezing. To try this pose, lie on your back with your feet pulled in close to your bottom. Slowly lift your back so that your tailbone is off the floor, and slide a couple cushions under your back. Relax your body so that your shoulderblades rest on the floor, but your chest remains elevated. Hold for up to 2 minutes.
- Downward-Facing Dog can help to drain your nasal passages. Start on all fours with your hands directly beneath your shoulders. Slowly straighten your legs and raise your bottom (so your body forms a triangle with the floor) and hold for a count of 5. Then lower your body back to its original position and repeat.

Namaste, and happy breathing!



## What is NATE and how does it impact YOU?

While checking all the heating and cooling companies' websites for the perfect match for your family, you've probably encountered this phrase a lot: "NATE certified technicians." But what does that mean, and why should you care?

Here are the basics: NATE stands for North American Technician Excellence and is an independent non-profit organization that uses knowledge-based testing to certify technicians in the HVACR industry. They are partnered with several industry organizations, as well as the Environmental Protection Agency, and are even incorporated into some city and state licensing programs. Altogether there are over 32,000 NATE certified technicians throughout North America.

When we say our technicians are NATE certified, it means that the people coming out to install or service your home air systems are knowledgeable, experienced, and current with the industry standards. Relying on NATE certified technicians for your home's needs can help insure your systems are serviced right the first time. This means you save money and inconvenience when it comes to problems that could have been avoided in the first place.



## Indoor Air Quality Survey

Need a night on the town? Complete our Indoor Air Quality survey between May 11, 2015 and June 12, 2015, and be entered in a drawing to win a \$100 gift card for dinner at the restaurant of your choosing! It's fast and simple—visit [www.appelheat.com/survey](http://www.appelheat.com/survey) to find out more.



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Valid May 11–June 12, 2015  
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[www.appelheat.com](http://www.appelheat.com)

## Keeping your A/C unit safe in spring and summer storms

The warmer seasons in Indiana often bring with them some pretty ferocious weather. Tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, and hail can do some pretty serious—and expensive—damage to your outdoor air conditioning units. Here are some simple steps you can take to avoid costly repairs:

Keep your yard clean and well-maintained. Routinely take a look to make sure your unit is clear from potential debris, such as dead trees or limbs. If you know a storm is coming, you may also want to secure patio furniture, grill covers, toys, etc. so they can't blow into your unit and cause damage.

Be sure to service your unit regularly and have the technician check to see that the refrigerant and electrical lines are secure. If a refrigerant line is blown loose during a storm, it could cost you hundreds of dollars in wasted freon!

If a storm is on the way, cover your unit with a tarp or boat cover to keep it safe from smaller debris. If it's looking to be a particularly bad storm with high winds, you might want to use heavy-duty straps to secure the entire unit.

Turn your air conditioning off during the storm, and unplug any window units. Once the storm has passed, make sure to go check your outdoor unit for any damage. If everything looks okay, then you can turn the unit back on. But if not, be sure to call a professional technician to get it repaired.