



## **Reduce energy bill by reducing the time your air conditioner operates**

The trick to reducing your summer air conditioning costs is to reduce the amount of time that your air conditioner runs. There are three basic ways to reduce operating hours.

The first is to make sure your system is running properly with good maintenance and service. The second is to increase your thermostat setting either manually or automatically. And the third is to employ low-cost cooling methods.

Your system's filters and coils should be cleaned periodically. A dirty system deteriorates air conditioning performance and increases operating time. Ask your service technician how to change filters and how to clean your outdoor coil. The filters should be changed every one to three months and the outdoor coil should be cleaned every year. You will probably find that you can easily change the filter yourself.

If your home is vacant for part of the day, use a programmable thermostat to turn the temperature up before you leave and down before you return. You will need to experiment with different time settings to test how long it takes the system to recover from the higher temperature.

By the way, closing registers in unused rooms doesn't usually help to reduce operating hours and may reduce your system's efficiency.

For low-cost cooling methods, try these effective improvements to reduce air conditioning operating hours.

- Set your thermostat up 4 degrees and run room fans to move the air and cool your family by the wind chill effect. Fans can counteract the higher thermostat setting.
- Install shades, blinds, awnings, sunscreens, or window films on your sunny-side windows.

- Insulate your attic to the maximum practical depth of insulation.
- Line-dry your clothes if possible.
- Don't use your oven on hot days.
- Install compact fluorescent lamps in the fixtures you use the most. Old-fashioned incandescent lamps produce 10 percent light and 90 percent heat.