

IN THIS ISSUE*Cheap Is No Bargain**Energy Saving Tips**Avoid Costly Compressor Failures**One Link of the Chain***CHEAP IS NO BARGAIN**

“It is unwise to pay too much, but it is worse to pay too little. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot...it can't be done. When you deal with the lowest bidder, it is wise to add something for the risk you run, and if you do that you will have enough to pay for something better!”

—JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900)

This simple fact regarding cost was written in the late 1800s, but it still holds true today. The HVAC industry is full of companies who claim to offer discount service, when in reality they perform “breakdown maintenance”. The scenario usually goes something like this: the building owner or manager calls for service (oftentimes, it's an emergency); the “discount” company sends someone out to patch things up, and the building owner is led to believe that everything is working fine. A short time later the system fails again, and this cycle continues until the system is in such disrepair that it must be replaced. Now the building owner is faced with a large, unexpected expense.

Maintaining a complex mechanical system in this way is like putting a band-aid on a serious injury. Without routine testing procedures there is no way of knowing what trouble lies ahead. So why then, when it comes to a building's HVAC system, which is mechanically very complex and represents a large investment, is routine maintenance often put off or forgotten?

One reason is because in commercial buildings, heating and air conditioning systems are usually housed where they're not readily seen, like on the roof or in a basement mechanical room. Their location makes it easy to forget that like anything mechanical, they need attention. The functions they perform are also easily taken for granted, until the system ceases to operate properly.

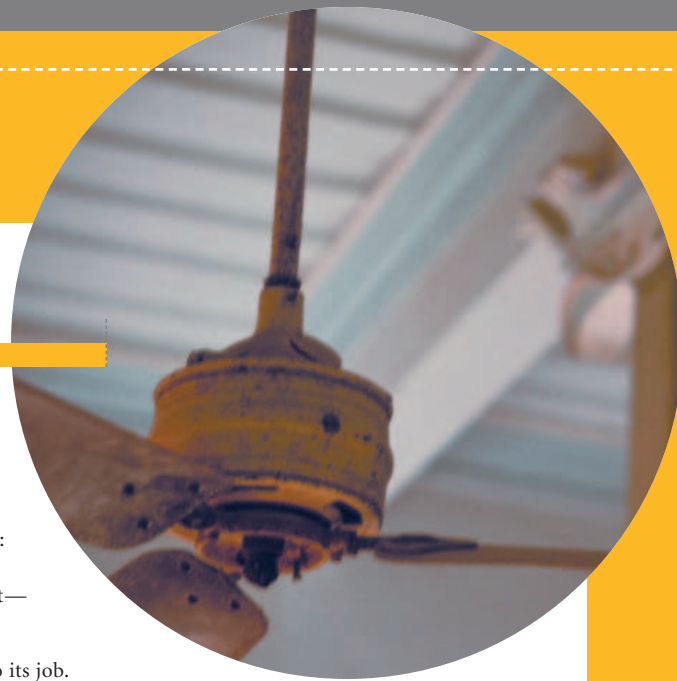
Quality mechanical contractors take a different approach to mechanical systems. Due to lack of maintenance, many building owners are spending far too much on their HVAC systems and related costs such as higher energy bills, loss of production, emergency repairs, and ultimately, premature replacement. Long-term success comes from the contractor sharing their customer's concerns and providing a planned maintenance program that offers solutions.

Because HVAC systems are extremely complex, quality contractors provide experts in all facets of operations, ensuring their customers get the right person for the job and information on technological advances. Regularly scheduled visits guarantee that the system is constantly monitored and maintained according to the manufacturer's recommendations. An offensive approach to maintaining such valuable equipment allows for budget control and just makes good business sense.

ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Here are some simple energy-saving tips from the U.S. Department of Energy that can help you cut cooling costs when the mercury skyrockets this summer:

- Avoid locating your air conditioner in direct sunlight—particularly on the south side of your building—where it will be forced to work much harder to do its job.
- Adjust your thermostat properly. Another method of increasing efficiency includes installing thermostats that automatically raise and lower the temperature for prescribed periods to save energy. This can also be done with conventional thermostats.
- When you want to achieve rapid temperature change for comfort, don't set the thermostat higher or lower than the desired temperature. That doesn't cool or heat a building any faster, it just makes the system work longer and harder.
- When the air conditioning is on, shut off ventilating fans as soon as they've done their job. In just one hour, these fans can blow away a tremendous amount of costly cooled air.
- Keep doors and windows shut whenever a cooling or heating system is working. The system cannot be helped by making it easier for outside air to flow into the building. When the freshness of outside air is wanted, turn off the air conditioning or heating unit first.
- Help your air conditioner breathe easier. Clean or replace the filter at least once a month in the summer. A filter clogged with dust, pollen or soot smothers the air conditioner and wastes energy and money. Let your monthly electric bill be your reminder to clean or change the filter.
- Let quality HVAC contractors help. Air conditioning contractors will also check filters as part of preventive maintenance, which is well worth its cost. This includes checking working parts such as belts and electrical contacts, making sure the thermostat is working properly and replacing or adding refrigerant as needed.



AVOID COSTLY COMPRESSOR FAILURES

One of the more costly repairs to an HVAC system typically involves the replacement of a compressor. While some contributing factors (age of equipment, usage patterns, lightning and power problems, etc.) cannot be avoided, some can. Here are some things you can do to minimize the possibility of a compressor problem:

- Clean condensers on a regular basis
- Keep filters and evaporator coils clean
- Check contactors and all related electrical connections
- Replace worn or loose belts
- Verify that the crankcase heater is operating properly
- Verify proper refrigerant charge
- Check controls for proper operating sequence

Investing a small amount of time and money upfront can go a long way to saving thousands of dollars down the road.



AIRTIGHT CELEBRATES

AirTight celebrated the holidays on December 18, 2004 in grand fashion. The festivities were held at a dinner & dance club in uptown Charlotte and went well into the evening with a good time had by many. For the second year in a row the party was held in this format to allow fun after dinner as opposed to just having a nice dinner then different folks heading different directions. "We really enjoy getting to hang out with everyone and visit on a social level as opposed to just talking about work as we do all day. This gives everyone to meet the spouses of the newer employees and catch-up with the ones you have not seen in a while" said Kathy Tarsitano one of AirTight's dispatchers.

The fun and enthusiasm that are displayed at all AirTight functions is really what makes this company so strong. "This group of people is so over-the-top and family oriented: it makes me very proud to say that I recently left another service contractor in Charlotte to join this team". That is what Emily Pazera said after only working at AirTight for less than one month.

AirTight wishes to thank all of the outstanding employees and their families for a great year! We know that it takes the whole family and team to get accomplished the amount of work that gets done; that includes wives, husbands and your children.

HOW LONG SHOULD IT LAST?

Ever thought about asking a salesman how long something you were thinking about buying would last? We often get that question when AirTight is visiting with a customer and discussing replacing the existing HVAC equipment. According to the major manufacturers 15 to 18 years seems to be the common answer. As you know there are many pieces of equipment that are much older than that running and performing as best they can. The additional energy you are consuming, to get the same effect, can and should make you start thinking about replacing your HVAC gear with newer and much more energy efficient equipment. The same is true for roof top units, chillers as well as split system installations.

If you have some older pieces that you are not so sure how energy efficient they are or could be, please give AirTight a call or visit us on-line at www.airtightHVAC.com to schedule an appointment. We have the experience and the knowledge to help answer those questions, make practical recommendations for reselection of equipment or simply help with your capital budgeting.

DENNY B. / THE FIRST

Denny Baumgart has the unique distinction of being the first service technician to ever work for AirTight. Denny made the decision to leave his former employer and join AirTight just as the company was coming into existence. Denny and his wife Cheryl hail from Buffalo, New York; they have three children that keep them on the move: Keith, Scott and Kimberly. Cheryl's mom also lives with them part-time in a nice in-law suite that Denny added to the family home.





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Visit us at www.theunifiedgroup.com or call 888.714.5990.

AIRTIGHT IN NEW JERSEY?

That's right, a talented team of service technicians, Larry Riggsby and Denny Baumgart went to New Jersey at the request of one of our Critical Site (data center) customers. The job was rather difficult and our client didn't want just anybody in his room. The trick was to replace seven computer room HVAC systems without any down-time to his facility. Working closely with the client, his landlord and a friendly local contractor the job was a huge success. It was completed on time and dead on the budget for man-hours required and cost to the client.

Thanks to the efforts of these men, our client has a great, newly refurbished facility that maintains his requirements for temperature and humidity with a little bit of a Southern accent.



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