

## Is it Time to Repair or Replace?

If your air conditioning and/or heating system fails, you are often faced with a choice, to repair the existing unit by replacing parts or by buying a new system. When faced with this decision there are three main factors you should consider: **life expectancy**, **efficiency** and **current condition** of your unit.

**Life expectancy.** Most units will last between 12 to 15 years for air conditioners and 15 to 20 on heating systems, after that point they become expensive to repair and break down more often. Also parts are sometimes discontinued which causes them to be more expensive, if not completely unavailable. Consider the age of your equipment and if a unit it's an 8 year old or more air conditioner or a 10 to 15 year old or more heat pump it is nearing the end of its life expectancy. (Note: You can add at least four years onto this number if you've consistently had it professionally maintained during this time.)

**Efficiency.** Even if you completely restore an aging unit (which is expensive to do!), you will still only have the efficiency that it was rated for when it was manufactured, at best. Newer unit efficiencies, due to constant improvement and increasing government-imposed energy standards, have greatly improved over the past 20 years. In a lot of cases, installing a new air conditioning and/or heating system can pay for itself in energy savings within a relatively short period of time.

**Current condition.** The condition of your unit is the third factor to consider. Take into account the quality of your current unit, number of breakdowns you've experienced, and how often your unit has been maintained. If you have not maintained your unit and breakdowns are frequent, replacement should be a serious consideration. In this situation, no matter what the skill of the installer or service technician, there is little that can be done except restore the unit.

So when faced with the decision to repair or replace your air conditioning and/or heating system, make sure to consider all of these factors. This will help you make an informed decision that is most beneficial to you!

**NOTE:** If you decide you need to replace your heating and cooling system, keep in mind there is a federal tax credit available on primary residences equal to 30%, up to \$1500, on qualified [Energy Star](#) rated furnaces, heat pumps and central air conditioners. You will need to act quickly, as this tax credit will expire on December 31, 2010!

Sources: [www.bayonet-inc.com](http://www.bayonet-inc.com)  
[www.inspection-perfection.com](http://www.inspection-perfection.com)  
[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)