

Warranties vs. Maintenance

In the HVAC (heating, cooling & ventilation) industry, we often hear the comments, "We don't need planned maintenance, we're still under warranty." Nothing could be further from the truth!

Manufacturers, to help compensate for problems caused by manufacturing defects, provide warranties on new equipment. If a piece of equipment fails during the warranty period and if the manufacturer accepts that the failure was not caused by outside influence (through improper use or lack of routine maintenance procedures), then they will generally provide a replacement part, free of charge. Equipment manufacturers don't typically cover labor and the necessary materials needed to replace a failed/ broken part, however, at Bayonet, we cover parts and labor for the first year on all repairs made and all systems we install.

In some cases, if a manufacturer determines that a lack of routine maintenance has contributed to the failure of equipment then the warranty coverage can be revoked leaving the homeowner to accept the full cost of repair.

Planned Maintenance inspections are important to not only keep your warranty valid, but also to keep your heating & cooling system working efficiently and safely. Most of us think that after we've bought our heating and cooling system, we're done. We put out the money to pay for this expensive equipment (the most expensive equipment in most homes!) and we expect it to work, without any more effort.

I doubt that any of us would think the same of our cars. We know that our cars require regular maintenance if we want them to keep performing day after day. If you were to stop all maintenance on your car it would eventually seize up and quit working. The same applies to your heating and cooling system, which without regular maintenance will eventually breakdown or fail in approximately 2-3 years. After spending a bunch of money on a HVAC system no one wants to turn around and have to shell out this same money 2-3 years down the road. Your heating and cooling equipment, like your car requires regular maintenance.

Looking back at our records, we were able to determine that 50% of our repair calls could have been avoided by regular maintenance. By having a yearly tune-up on your system, you can avoid much more expensive repairs.

During a typical tune-up, your technician will have a long list of checks that they perform on your heating & cooling system. These checks enable the technician to catch things like a loose electrical connection or parts with visible wear. These problems caught at the time of a tune-up can easily be fixed and will help avoid costly repairs later.

Lack of maintenance will lead to dirt and dust build-up in your system as well. According to Energy Star, a division of the EPA, "Dirt and neglect are the #1 causes of heating and cooling system failure." This build-up will cause your system to run harder and longer and greatly decreases its efficiency. As your system works harder to beat the heat or cold, your monthly utility bills will increase.

Lack of maintenance on your heating & cooling system can also lead to safety issues. During a tune-up all of the electrical connections are examined, and the unit disconnect switch along with all of the safety devices are checked. If you do not have your system checked out annually you could be running a serious safety risk and not even be aware of it.

As with our cars, we realize that if we don't do regular maintenance, like oil changes and tune-ups, we will void our warranties. If something major goes wrong with our car we won't be able to go into the dealership and have it fixed under warranty. Well, the same goes for your heating and cooling system. Most appliances have a 5-10 year warranty, and if you don't maintain the equipment and something goes wrong, you're out of luck and the warranty will be void. You'll end up spending a large amount of money to fix it or even replace equipment that would have been covered under warranty, had you kept up with maintenance.

A lack of maintenance leads to repairs and early equipment failure, inefficiency, higher utility bills and an overall decrease in the system's ability to keep your home comfortable, not to mention, invalidating your warranty and creating an unsafe environment in your home. When you look at all of this, the cost of a yearly tune-up is cheap in comparison!

Sources: www.bayonet-inc.com
www.energystar.gov