

HOW IMPORTANT IS HVAC MAINTENANCE ON A COMMERCIAL BUILDING?

From a business owner's perspective, there are a number of great reasons to have your commercial HVAC system regularly and professionally inspected and serviced. First and most importantly, properly maintaining your HVAC system will help ensure the safety and comfort of your building's inhabitants. A well-maintained HVAC system helps to maintain optimal indoor air quality and consistent, comfortable temperatures, translating to healthy, productive employees. Proper HVAC system maintenance will also help keep your utilities costs down by ensuring maximum efficiency and will also help you avoid expensive repairs and replacements.

Like the systems themselves, maintenance requirements for commercial HVAC systems are quite a bit different than for residential systems. Furthermore, maintenance requirements for commercial systems will vary greatly based on what takes place in a particular facility. An office environment, for example, will have vastly different maintenance needs than a manufacturing facility. Because the amount of dust in the air will be much greater in certain types of facilities, the filters must be changed much more frequently.

As a basis for comparison, most of our residential contracts involve changing the filters once or twice per year, with the understanding that the homeowners will change the filters monthly. In a commercial setting, we normally replace the filters at least four times a year; and facilities in which chemicals are used or where significant amounts of dust are present will require much more frequent filter changes.

It's also important to routinely check the heat exchanger in a commercial HVAC system. If the unit is outside (as is common with commercial systems), it is much more likely to crack. A cracked heat exchanger will reduce the system's efficiency and effectiveness. While a small crack may have only a small impact, the problem can quickly grow in severity. As the crack widens, the effects become more and more pronounced. By having your system inspected regularly, you can ensure that a cracked heat exchanger will not go unnoticed and that appropriate corrective action will be taken before the problem becomes serious.

Because commercial facilities are generally more airtight than residential spaces, it is important to be sure that an adequate amount of fresh air is entering the space. Adequate fresh air is particularly important when outdoor temperatures are comfortable. Because commercial systems are much more expensive to run than residential systems (and generally used much more intensely), it's essential to cut costs wherever possible. On a nice day, if air from the outdoors is flowing freely, the system won't need to work so hard.

In order to make sure that enough air is flowing into the space from outdoors, your HVAC contractor will need to thoroughly check and clean the dampers. Improperly functioning dampers can contribute to poor indoor air quality as well as increase the system's energy consumption. Once the dampers have been thoroughly inspected, each moving part should be cleaned and lubricated to ensure optimal performance.

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