

Frozen Air Conditioners are a Common Summer Problem

Ironically a good number of the service calls we receive during the peak of summer are for "frozen" air conditioners. In most cases, the unit is working so hard to make your home cooler that ice forms on the evaporator coil and your unit stops working.

How does this happen? The evaporator coil is the component of a central A/C unit that transfers heat from the inside to the outside area home through evaporation. When it cannot keep up with the needed heat transfer, it overcools, causing ice built-up. When we see ice on an evaporator coil, it means one of three things:

- 1) There is airflow restriction, usually caused by a filthy filter, but occasionally is because of a faulty motor or blockage
- 2) There is a low refrigerant charge (insufficient coolant) because of a leak, or
- 3) A mechanical failure has occurred with the cooling component—a part is broken.

"Topping Off" Refrigerant is Bad

I feel compelled to de-bunk a misconception held by many that "topping off" a system with refrigerant is normal. Your central air conditioning system is a sealed system. If your system is low on refrigerant, it has a leak which must be located and repaired by a qualified professional. Routine "topping off" of refrigerant is something that we simply do not do. Nor do we sell refrigerant by the pound. This does not fix your problem, and it is damaging (and illegal) to knowingly release refrigerant into the environment.

Before You Call--what you should (and should not) do

The good news is that frozen units can almost always be fixed. The bad news is that it takes a little time. Before you place a call for service, here are some things that you can do to speed the process:

- Although your home may already be uncomfortably warm, you must turn off the cooling by putting your air conditioner in "thaw" mode. To do this, set the FAN to "ON" and the MODE to "OFF", the air conditioner will thaw out in 24 hours or less. There is nothing you can do to "thaw" the unit by adjusting temperature or by dousing the ice with warm water. This is not only ineffective, but you may cause further damage to your system.
- Also, make sure the airflow to your system is unrestricted. If you haven't replaced the filter in your unit, that could be contributing to the problem. Your system will work best when all vents are in their full, open positions.

Contact Us Anytime

You can reach MK Russell & Abbott 24/7 by calling (865) 982-5133 or by going online at CleanAirComfort.com and making a service request. A service technician will be dispatched to diagnose and fix the problem. We are open Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. for your convenience.

Remember, Just Whistle and We'll Come Running!



Sincerely,

Chris Hurley

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Chris Hurley, president of MK Russell & Abbott has been in the HVAC business for more than 20 years. He is a state licensed heating and A/C contractor, as well as being certified in design, fabrication, layout and installation of forced air heating /cooling systems.

