



## Heating and Cooling

Heating and cooling your home uses more energy and drains more energy dollars than any other system in your home. Typically, 45% of your utility bill goes for heating and cooling. What's more, heating and cooling systems in the United States together emit 150 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year, adding to global climate change. They also generate about 12% of the nation's sulfur dioxide and 4% of the nitrogen oxides, the chief ingredients in acid rain.

No matter what kind of heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning system you have in your house, you can save money and increase your comfort by properly maintaining and upgrading your equipment. But remember, an energy-efficient furnace alone will not have as great an impact on your energy bills as using the whole-house approach. By combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with appropriate insulation, air sealing, and thermostat settings, you can cut your energy use for heating and cooling, and reduce environmental emissions, from 20% to 50%.

## Heating and Cooling Tips

- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer.
- Clean or replace filters on furnaces once a month or as needed.
- Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators as needed; make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes.
- Bleed trapped air from hot-water radiators once or twice a season; if in doubt about how to perform this task, call a professional.

- Place heat-resistant radiator reflectors between exterior walls and the radiators.
- Turn off kitchen, bath, and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you are done cooking or bathing; when replacing exhaust fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.
- During the heating season, keep the draperies and shades on your south facing windows open during the day to allow the sunlight to enter your home and closed at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.
- During the cooling season, keep the window coverings closed during the day to prevent solar gain.
- **\$ Long-Term Savings Tip:** Select energy-efficient products when you buy new heating and cooling equipment. Your contractor should be able to give you energy fact sheets for different types, models, and designs to help you compare energy usage. For furnaces, look for high Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency (AFUE) ratings.
- **\$ Long-Term Savings Tip:** For air conditioners, look for a high Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER). The current minimum is 13 SEER for central air conditioners.