

Repair or Replace? YOU DECIDE.

It's a common dilemma in any home when televisions, computers, and other household appliances begin to show their age. Should you repair or replace them? The same goes for your heating and cooling system. When it breaks down, it's tempting to go the quick route and pay for repairs to get it up and running again. That quick-fix may seem the least expensive route now, but it may not offer the most value in the long haul.

Determining when it's time to call for repairs or replace equipment can be difficult. There's a lot to consider: the system's age, overall condition, efficiency, and energy and repair costs. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR® program offers a few tips to help you determine if you should junk your equipment or try to squeeze more life out of it with repairs. If two or more items apply to you in the Replace column, then it's probably time to consider making the investment of an ENERGY STAR qualified replacement system.

Sometimes, it's not so clear that your system is in trouble. Noisy cooling equipment, unevenly heated or cooled rooms, excessive dust, or frequent cycling on and off—all of these may indicate an inefficient heating and cooling system. In this case, you'd want to call a professional contractor to review the value and comfort features of new ENERGY STAR qualified equipment.

Repair or replace. It's your decision. One thing is for certain: if you decide to make a change in your heating and cooling system, make sure a professional contractor does the complete job. Only proper installation of your equipment will ensure that it operates at peak efficiency and delivers all the benefits you expect and paid for.

For complete information on keeping your home comfortable year-round, get the ENERGY STAR Guide to Energy-Efficient Cooling and Heating at www.energystar.gov/homeimprovement or 1-888-STAR-YES (1-888-782-7937).

Should you repair or replace your air conditioner, heat pump, furnace, or boiler?

Continue to repair if:	Time to replace if:
Under 10 years old (under 15 years for a furnace or boiler)	Over 10 years old (over 15 years for a furnace or boiler)
Good service record	Has had repeat problems
Major repairs made recently; only minor repair needed	Extensive or costly repairs needed
On/off cycling is not excessive	On/off cycling seems excessive
Performing up to expectations	Not performing up to expectations
Moving soon	Staying in the home for a long period

****NOTE TO CONTRACTORS:** We strongly suggest this article be paired in print or on the Web with an article or piece on energy efficiency and/or ENERGY STAR. This article is available to use as is in your communication vehicles (newsletters, Web site, newspaper insert, etc.) or can be modified according to your needs. Please contact:

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