

What Is Central AC Compressor

A central AC compressor is basically the “heart” of your entire AC system. Without it, your air conditioner wouldn’t be able to cool your home.

Just like a heart pumps blood throughout the body, **your compressor pumps “refrigerant”, a special fluid that absorbs heat from the air, throughout the AC system.**

And because your compressor is such an integral part of the AC system, it can be pretty **costly to replace one.**

In this article, we’ll look at:

- How much it costs to replace a central AC compressor
- 4 ways you can extend the life of your compressor

Need professional help for your central AC compressor? Just contact us and we’ll send over an experienced tech to inspect your unit.

4 ways to extend the life of your compressor

1) Change your filter regularly

A clogged filter restricts the amount of warm air that passes over your cold refrigerant coils. And over time, that can cause your evaporator coil (the indoor unit) to freeze over.

If your evaporator coil freezes over, it can cause cold, liquid refrigerant to flow back to your compressor and destroy it (this is called “slugging”).

To avoid this problem, check your filter at least every 1-3 months and when it looks like the filter to the right (in the picture below), change it immediately.

2) Wash off outdoor unit

Over time, dirt and debris can collect on your outdoor unit.

So why might that be a problem? Well your outdoor unit (called your condensing unit) is responsible for dumping all that heat that’s been collected from the air inside your home. But **a layer of dirt over the condensing unit can “suffocate” your condenser** and prevent heat from escaping.

When that happens, it forces your compressor to work harder, longer and less efficiently to cool your home. And over time, that can **decrease your compressor’s life span.**

To clean the unit, spray a hose on a gentle setting directly onto your outdoor unit. You should also remove any sticks, leaves or larger objects.

You can also use a condenser coil cleaner, [like this one](#) to remove debris from hard to reach areas.

3) Keep shrubbery, fences, etc. at least 3 feet from compressor

Just like a thick layer of dirt can suffocate your outdoor unit, so can decorative objects that are closer than 3 feet from the unit.

Things like shrubbery and fences can prevent heat from escaping your outdoor unit and force your compressor to work longer than it should.

To make sure your compressor lives a long, healthy life, make sure that you allow at least 3 feet of breathing space on all sides of your outdoor unit. And, no, you should never use decorative AC “covers”.

4) Get your AC maintained every spring

According to EnergyStar, annual pre-season tune-ups can keep your AC system (and the compressor) in great shape. [AC maintenance](#) can also lower cooling bills and prevent costly repairs.

So, make sure that you get your AC maintained by a professional every spring.