

CHOOSING A NEW ROOM AIR CONDITIONER

If you are thinking about replacing your room air unit, consider this: today's units can save an average of \$26 per year in energy costs compared to air conditioners built in 1980. Visit our "Who Makes What" section to find manufacturers who make air conditioners. You can also visit www.cooloff.org to find the right air conditioner for you.

Buying considerations: before buying a new unit, think about these important factors: cooling capacity, operating efficiency, and certification.

Cooling Capacity: a room air conditioner's cooling capacity is the amount of heat and moisture transferred from indoor air to the outdoors. This capacity is expressed in Btu/hr. The higher the BTU/hr, the greater the cooling capacity. The right sized unit for your home is necessary to insure maximum cooling satisfaction. A unit with too much cooling capacity will result in a cold, clammy feeling because it will not run long enough to lower humidity. It will also cycle on and off excessively, reducing efficiency and wasting energy. A unit that's too small will not be able to cool adequately. Use AHAM's Cooling Load Estimate Form to help you determine what size room air conditioner you need. The result of your calculation will be in Btu/hr. Be sure to buy a unit as close to the recommended capacity as possible. Click on Getting Started at left to download your own copy of the form.

Operating Efficiency: Once you have determined cooling capacity, look for a high efficiency model in that size. Room air conditioner efficiency is expressed as EER (Energy Efficiency Rating). EER is computed by dividing Btu/hr by the watts of power used. The higher the EER number, the more efficient the model.

Look for AHAM's green and white room air conditioner certification seal. Certified units display their cooling capacity, electrical input (expressed in amperes), EER, and, if they provide heat, the heating capacity is expressed in Btu/hr. Most new room air units carry the AHAM seal because the companies who market the majority of models are involved in this voluntary certification program. Manufacturers use industry developed test procedures to measure the cooling (and heating) capacity of their appliances. AHAM checks the certified claims against test reports from an independent testing laboratory. Newly certified products are listed by brand name and model number in semiannual directories.

The AHAM seal is your guarantee that the model you choose will maximize your cooling comfort and save you energy dollars.