

Mold and Your A/C Unit

By

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Mold is a natural part of our world. It is everywhere we go. It plays a very important part in our world by breaking down dead organic matter such as leaves, decayed trees, grass cuttings and other things of nature. It does not belong indoors and should be avoided. It grows in your A/C Unit (see left) because it is a wet environment by the coils. The coil is a vital part of your air conditioning system. If it is not kept clean, your system will not work efficiently. Poor quality filters can cause your system to fail over time, the extra stress placed on your system by blocked airflow can cause your system to fail and grow mold on the coils. As the A/C cools your home, it dehumidifies the air. The dehumidified water then drains off of the coils (right) into the drain pan and



then runs out the drain line. There is always slime mold in your A/C Drain Pan. This is what causes a water backup in the unit. The mold builds up and then finally stops up the drain line. The drain line (left) should be checked on a

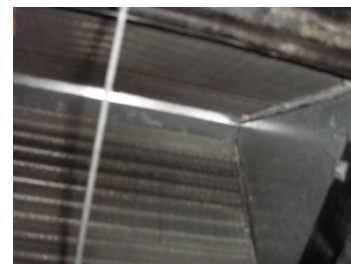


regular basis. Look for the exterior location of the drain line to see if it is draining properly. Maintenance is important regarding your A/C or you



can guarantee there will be a water backup or a leak if you do not. If it starts to back up, call a proficient A/C Contractor who understands the importance of Indoor Air Quality. If you are

not handy, consult with your A/C Contractor regarding a Maintenance Contract to take care of your A/C Unit. Keeping the system clean is the filter's job. As you can see in this picture, some filters are not up to this job. Using poor quality filters can cause results such as the picture to the right. The cost of having a service call to clean or change the coils in your A/C System



would pay for the high quality filters of at least 5 years. Using a fiberglass filter gives you minimal protection for your A/C System. The factory filter also gives you minimal protection

from the elements in the air. Our general rule is: Hold the filter up; if you can see thru the filter, it only gives minimal protection from allergens, dirt, dander and mold spores. Our minimum recommended filter is a Merv 7 Pleated Filter. They are available in Home Depot, Lowe's or your local hardware. As always, check with your units manufacturer to see if it the filter will void their warranty. This can be caused by using some of the very efficient pleated filter which can cause high arrestance of a Merv Rating.



The Merv Rating stands for: Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value. It is a test by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers. (ASHRAE) The number is so the consumer can compare filters. The higher the number, the more efficient it is.

Tips on A/C Maintenance



- Most A/C Systems over 5 years old need to be serviced on an annual basis.
- Routine maintenance can double the life of your unit.
- Health risks can be dramatically reduced by proper system maintenance.
- Energy costs will be lower by maintaining the A/C Unit.
- Ducts should be inspected every 3 to 5 years for possible deterioration and leaks.

Artemiss is the owner of Safe-Homes Environmental Consultants and has been in business since 1991. He was an Engineer with Southern Bell and Bellsouth prior to starting Safe-Homes. His specialty is Asthma, Allergies and Chemically Injured. He works with local Doctors trying to provide safe housing for individuals with severe allergies. He is affiliated with the Indoor Air Quality Association with multiple certifications. He can be reached at (954) 531-6476. Website: www.safe-homes.com

