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Air Conditioners

What is an Air Conditioner?

An **air conditioner** requires three components to cool air in a home—a compressor, condenser, and evaporator. The job of each component is essential to the effectiveness of the air conditioner. In most cases, the air conditioner's compressor and condenser is located on the outside of the home, while the evaporator is located inside, normally within the furnace.

Air conditioning is the removal of heat from indoor air for thermal comfort. In another sense, the term can refer to any form of cooling, heating, ventilation, or disinfection that modifies the condition of air. An air conditioner (often referred to as AC or air con.) is an appliance, system, or machine designed to stabilize the air temperature and humidity within an area (used for cooling as well as heating depending on the air properties at a given time). Typically using a refrigeration cycle but sometimes using evaporation, commonly for comfort cooling in residential and commercial buildings.

Most people think that air conditioners lower the temperature in their homes simply by pumping cool air in. What's really happening is the warm air from your house is being removed and cycled back in as cooler air. This cycle continues until your thermostat reaches the desired temperature.

An air conditioner is basically a refrigerator without the insulated box. It uses the evaporation of a refrigerant, like Freon, to provide cooling. The mechanics of the Freon evaporation cycle are the same in a refrigerator as in an air conditioner. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, the term Freon is generically "used for any of various nonflammable fluorocarbons used as refrigerants and as propellants for aerosols."



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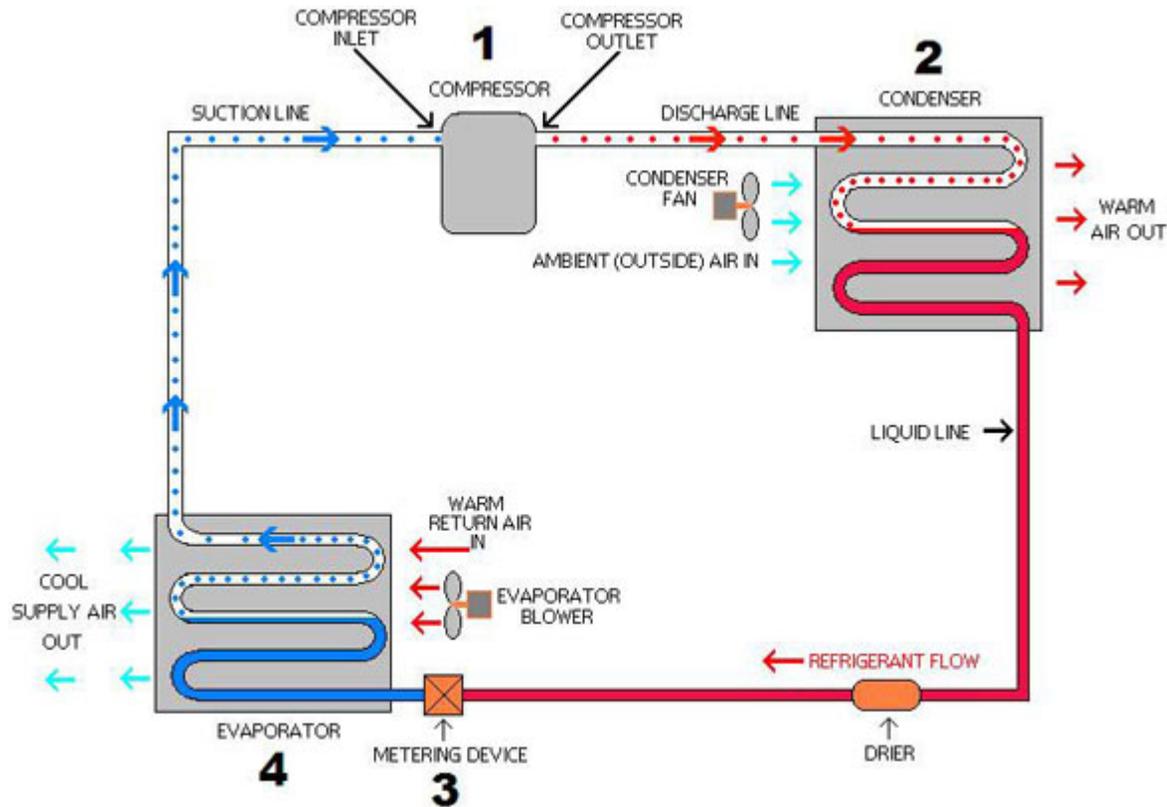
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This is how the evaporation cycle in an air conditioner works:

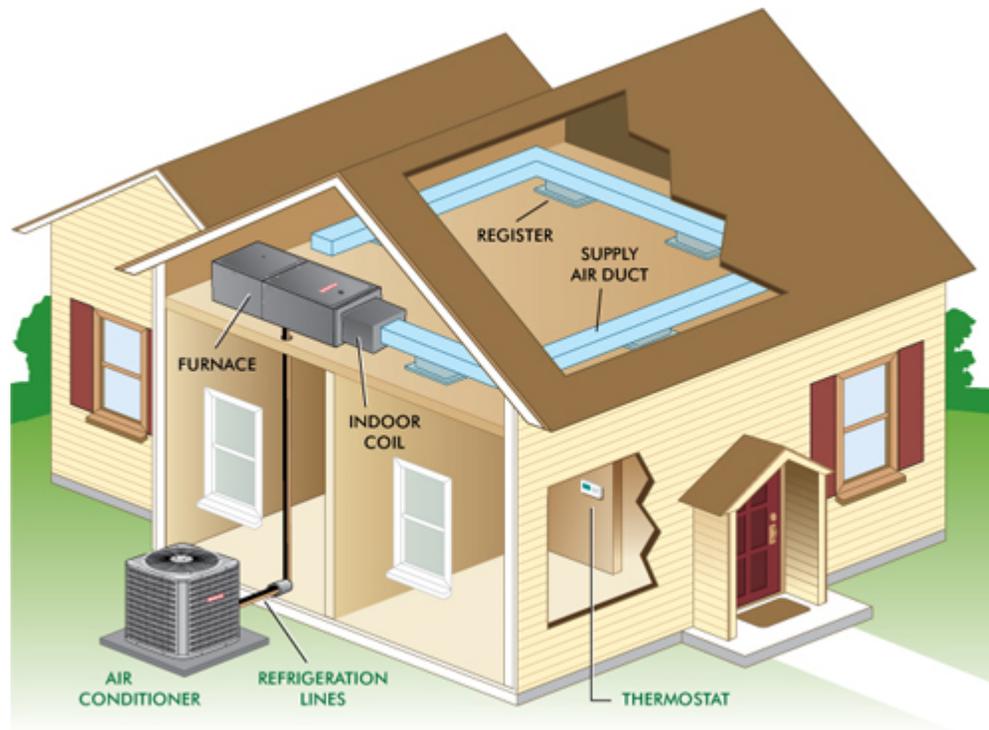
The compressor compresses cool Freon gas, causing it to become hot, high-pressure Freon gas (red in the diagram above).

- This hot gas runs through a set of coils so it can dissipate its heat, and it condenses into a liquid.
- The Freon liquid runs through an expansion valve, and in the process, it evaporates to become cold, low-pressure Freon gas (light blue in the diagram above).

3. This cold gas runs through a set of coils that allow the gas to absorb heat and cool down the air inside the building.

Mixed in with the Freon is a small amount of lightweight oil. This oil lubricates the compressor.

Air conditioners help clean your home's air as well. Most indoor units have filters that catch dust, pollen, mold spores and other allergens as well as smoke and everyday dirt found in the air. Most air conditioners also function as dehumidifiers. They take excess water from the air and use it to help cool the unit before getting rid of the water through a hose to the outside. Other units use the condensed moisture to improve efficiency by routing the cooled water back into the system to be reused.



Facts:

- The typical central air conditioning system is a split system, with an outdoor air conditioning, or "compressor bearing unit" and an indoor coil, which is usually installed on top of the furnace in the home.
- Using electricity as its power source, the compressor pumps refrigerant through the system to gather heat and moisture from indoors and remove it from the home.
- Heat and moisture are removed from the home when warm air from inside the home is blown over the cooled indoor coil. The heat in the air transfers to the coil, thereby "cooling" the air.
- The heat that has transferred to the coil is then "pumped" to the exterior of the home, while the cooled air is pumped back inside, helping to maintain a comfortable indoor temperature.
- Central air conditioning can also be provided through a package unit or a heat pump.

Benefits:

- **Indoor comfort during warm weather** - Central air conditioning helps keep your home cool and reduces humidity levels.
- **Cleaner air** - As your central air conditioning system draws air out of various rooms in the house through return air ducts, the air is pulled through an air filter, which removes airborne particles such as dust and lint. Sophisticated filters may remove microscopic pollutants, as well. The filtered air is then routed to air supply ductwork that carries it back to rooms.

Quieter operation - Because the compressor bearing unit is located outside the home, the indoor noise level from its operation is much lower than that of a

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