

Keeping Cool and Finding Trustworthy AC Repair

BBB Column

By Lauren Galley, Regional Director, Bryan/College Station Better Business Bureau

Slowly but surely, that famous Texas heat is returning, and will be back in full force before we know it. With such high temperatures in the near future, it's important to be prepared in case you begin experiencing problems with your air conditioning unit or just need a preventative maintenance check.

According to energy.gov, furnaces and air conditioners need their filters cleaned and changed every couple of months. A dirty filter can also increase energy costs and damage equipment. So, while your allergies may be caused by cedar or mold, regularly maintaining your home's heating and cooling systems can improve the overall air quality of your home, cut energy costs and help alleviate allergies.

If your AC needs a bit of work or isn't cooling properly, annual spring maintenance can help improve efficiency and prolong the life of your unit. Common air conditioner problems include a low or leaking refrigerant, issues with the thermostat, a clogged drain or a dirty filter.

In 2017, BBB received 2,500 complaints regarding AC Contractors nationwide. That number increased to 2,800 in 2018. These complaints can range up to \$1,500 in financial loss, and often report issues with billing, the quality of workmanship, or lack of proper permits.

As a consumer, you should also always be on the look out for red flags of unreliable businesses. BBB warns against these signs for untrustworthy AC Contractors or any other kind of home improvement services:

- **Door-to-door solicitors.** Solicitors are generally not working with legitimate businesses. If somebody comes to your door offering repair services, ask for a list of references as well as their business name. You can contact their references and check their business rating or complaint history on bbb.org.
- **No license numbers.** If they can't or won't provide you with their license numbers, this could be an indication that they don't have a license at all. In the event the contractor is unable to provide this information, it is always best to move on to another professional or business that can. You can verify that licenses are correct and up to date at tdlr.texas.gov/LicenseSearch.
- **Asks for a large upfront payment.** A typical payment schedule should follow the "Rule of Thirds." The first payment is given when signing the contract and helps pay for materials, the second payment when work begins, and the final payment when the job is finished, and you are satisfied with the quality of work.
- **Pressures you for a quick decision.** Typically, they might try this by offering you a great deal and saying its only good right then. In most cases, if a deal is good one day, it will be good the next.

To search for trustworthy AC Repair, visit bbb.org, and be sure to ask accredited businesses how you can leave reviews when you have a positive experience.

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