



# HVAC Fact Check

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Are these common misconceptions  
costing you?



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MYTH

## Set It and Forget It for Savings

This is a good one to tackle first and get out of the way. Some people (even some who should know better) think if you stop heating or cooling your building to the perfect temp, getting back to that perfect temp will cost more than if you'd left the system running. The fact is, keeping a space at the ideal temperature is always using energy. Sustaining your ideal temperature when you don't need to likely costs more – maybe a lot more – than getting the building back to ideal temp. A good HVAC engineer can calculate that tipping point for you and help you actually save energy with that knowledge. For instance, building control systems help you better match energy spend to how spaces are used.

Notice we didn't say turning your HVAC off when you don't need it is a great move, which leads into our next myth...



MYTH

## When the Weather's Nice, Turn It Off

Don't disregard the V in HVAC. Ventilation is an important part of the system. Your indoor air quality directly depends on the number of air changes in your facility. HVAC systems also control the humidity, a key comfort factor. Improper ventilation can increase your risk of mold growth, encourage bacteria and virus transmission, and increase the particulate count inside, including allergens.

**Improved air quality and ventilation improved  
cognitive performance scores by 61%<sup>1</sup>**

**The risk of increased short-term sick leave  
attributed to poor ventilation: 35%<sup>2</sup>**

1. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/green-office-environments-linked-with-higher-cognitive-function-scores/>

2. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1034/j.1600-0668.2000.010004212.x>



MYTH

## If It's Not Broke, Don't Fix It

Waiting for a part to break pretty much guarantees more damage is done throughout your system than if you'd just fixed the problem earlier. It's also a pretty safe bet the system has been wasting energy, running inefficiently to make up for whatever's going wrong. Those are two hefty premiums you're paying to delay maintenance on that part. Not to mention that proactive maintenance could have extended the life of that part, so that's three ways you're paying for it. Now consider that the repair's costs are likely larger, and the productivity you've lost from the system going offline... you get the picture.

**"Statistics show that the cost of a typical repair is 5-15 times greater than the cost of the (proactive maintenance) effort that would have prevented the failure from occurring."**

*"Maintenance Costs and Life Cycle Cost Analysis"  
by Diego Galar, Peter Sandborn, Uday Kumar (2017)*



MYTH

## Anyone Can Change a Filter

Maybe you change your own filters at home. “How hard can it be?” you ask, and you’re right, in that it’s not the most exciting challenge HVAC technicians face. But an improperly placed filter damages the asset, cuts your efficiency, and puts your indoor air quality at risk. And think about this: how often do you forget to change your filter at home?

Maybe the biggest risk to treating a filter change like a filter change is opportunity cost. Just banging open a panel, switching a filter, and checking a box ignores a lot of useful data. A qualified technician uses a filter change to discover issues before they become issues you’ll have to deal with.

And like a lot of tasks today, a filter change isn’t just a filter change. Making sure the schedule is kept, efficiently managing the filter change with other tasks, making sure documentation is done and all the administrative boxes are checked, that’s all part of it. For instance, using the proper filter (and not arbitrarily going for a cheaper one) might go against a building’s LEED certification. A well-managed, professional process streamlines all that.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a black and gold pen, signing a document. The document has a line labeled 'Signature' and some blurred text above it. The background is a light-colored wall with a white circular graphic element on the left side.

MYTH

## Service Contracts Are a Waste of Money

If an elevator inspector doesn't find anything wrong, was it a waste of money to pay for the inspection? Lives may not hang on your HVAC maintenance, but let's think about what does... Capital costs to replace equipment, repairs, parts, excess utility spend, lost productivity, plus all the headaches and budget nightmares to boot.

Service contracts look like an expense, but ask any engineer, and they'll tell you the opposite is true. They're an asset with great KPI: saving future costs, mitigating risk, extending the life of capital spending, cutting energy spend, plus you'll face fewer headaches and nightmare budget reviews.

In fact, our HVAC experts are so sure of the value of a service contract, that ABM will agree to replace units that fail during the life of the agreement. How's that for full service? If you're still doubting the value of preventive maintenance, it's time to talk to the team that believes in it so much that they'll take on the cost of asset replacement.



Don't let myths keep you from real savings.

Talk to the team that builds real value for clients.

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