



Technical Fact Sheet

Multifamily Facility Management Services

AIR CONDITIONER COVERS

Description:

Multifamily buildings built after 1960 often have permanent openings in the wall for air conditioning units. These metal boxes are often overlooked in the winter but can be a source of considerable energy waste during the heating season.

Air conditioner covers can greatly reduce the amount of cold air flowing through the opening. In addition to saving energy dollars, the air conditioner cover reduces drafts which irritate the tenants. They increase the living room comfort of the residents.

In some buildings, air conditioners have been installed in positions of high temperature (close to baseboard heaters) or high humidity (the kitchen, for example) and the plaster around the unit may eventually crack, bubble and blister due to condensation from the cold metal which protrudes from the wall. Air conditioner covers will also help prevent this maintenance problem.

How to Implement

Air conditioner covers are available through insulation contractors and energy management companies, but good quality covers can also be purchased directly from hardware stores. Most air conditioners are a standard size and the covers can be easily installed by an on-site maintenance person. Two types of air conditioner covers are available: those that fit on the exterior of the air conditioner unit, and those that fit on the interior.

Exterior covers can be effective provided they can be fitted tightly to the exterior surface of the building. This is sometimes difficult and wind and weather conditions often eventually ruin an exterior vinyl or plastic sheet cover. As a result, interior covers are usually the best choice. Interior covers also have an advantage over exterior ones because they are much easier to install since no ladder is required. Interior covers are usually reconstructed boxes, insulated and weather-stripped to fit tightly against the interior wall.