



10

things to consider before installing or
upgrading your Air Conditioning System

A special report prepared for
Western Australian homes
and commercial buildings

10 things to consider before installing or upgrading your Air Conditioning System

You want to air condition your home, that's great, but how do I go about it? What should I know?

These considerations are generally based upon aspects that are important in the purchasing of a reverse cycle ducted air conditioner.

Buying an air conditioner is a significant investment and requires some research and much questioning as you find conflicting advice which can lead to total confusion. If you are upgrading your existing system, you will generally be doing so because your system has either broken down and is not viable to repair or you have been sold an inefficient, undersized or oversized unit that does not suit your requirements or lifestyle.

Because of your experiences you will be possibly better informed than someone who has never had a reverse cycle system. However, you will find that much has changed with technology and you will be faced with many more options.

If you've never had air conditioning, you will need to do lots of research and ask more questions in order to get the system that best suits your requirements.

The following 10 points were carefully considered and designed by Crispair to help you to ask the 'right questions' to make the right selection of the brand and company you are about to choose.

1

the brand

There are a variety of air conditioners on the market which vary markedly in price. Regardless of the brand, you should focus on an inverter as this will give you significant energy and efficiency savings. Generally you will find that the more expensive the air conditioner, the more features it will have. The two most important features to look for are noise levels and efficiency.

Magazines such as "Choice" regularly compare brand and are useful in consolidating the particular brand you may be considering.

Western Australian weather can be quite extreme so it is important to select a unit that offers the highest and lowest ambient temperature which for you means it will still keep working on either the hottest or coldest day. The system must also be easy to operate.

2

the company

A good company will give you the right advice in helping you decide up the brand that best suits you. Many companies sell the same brand of air conditioner but offer different levels of service.

Things to consider are:

- Is their advice tailored specifically to your requirements?
- How long have they been in business?
- Are they air conditioning specialists or do they sell a variety of products such as hot water systems etc?
- Do they have a solid reputation?
- Did they give you expert advice that you didn't receive elsewhere?
- Are they focused on customer service?
- Do they offer client testimonials?
- Do they have a service department?
- Is the proposal detailed and in writing?
- Is a plan included in the proposal?
- What warranties are offered?

These are all important points to consider. Some of these are covered in more detail in the following pages.

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the cost

It is important to identify what your budget is as there will be considerable variations between different companies. Generally, you will get what you pay for.

If you are being offered the same product at a substantially reduced price then quite possibly there will be a compromise on materials, design or service which may lead to an inefficient system. Remember the bitterness of poor quality remains long after the sweetness of low price is forgotten.

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the design

Any air conditioner is only as good as the design that goes with it. Every house is different so every air conditioning system should be designed specifically for your home. Ducting must be correctly sized to deliver the correct amount of air. A well designed system will give you much more efficiency and reduced running costs. Multiple zoning is important. Ideally, all rooms should be individually zoned which gives you greater flexibility and efficiency.

Cheaper proposals will most likely have less zones than more expensive proposals. While the cheaper proposal may suit your budget it is worth asking what it would cost to have multiple zones as this will lead to significant savings once it is operational.

Be wary about signing up with a company if you have not seen a plan or design of what they propose. This plan should also show the proposed location of the outdoor unit and controller location.

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the size

Air conditioning and lifestyle are very closely associated. If you have a young family then your air conditioning needs can be totally different to someone whose children have left home. As a rule of thumb most air conditioners are sized to have enough capacity to condition all your living areas at one time.

The living area may consist of three distinct areas such as the main living, family room and home theatre. The correctly sized air conditioner should allow you enough capacity to condition all these three areas at one time.

If it has been sensibly designed then it would enable you to switch off the family and home theatre if they are not being used and turn on one or two bedrooms if required.

Power requirements are also critical as in some instances you may require a power upgrade if there is not sufficient power at your meter box. This is quite expensive and if required needs to be added to your budget price.

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a detailed proposal

A well presented proposal should specify these important points:

- Did they give you expert advice that you didn't receive elsewhere?
- Brand and model number
- Inverter or non-inverter?
- Capacity
- Proposed zoning and kW requirements
- Types of outlets
- Inclusions
- Exclusions
- Power requirements
- Detailed plan of duct layout
- Outdoor unit & controller location
- Acceptance form outlining payment terms
- Warranty details
- Testimonials
- Condensate drain & emergency drain details
- Brochures and supporting information

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installation and commissioning

The installation is the most disruptive and emotional part of the whole process as the person you are talking to in the showroom will not be the one who installs the system. On the day of installation there will be a multitude of tradesman at your home.

The process can be messy so it is important to ask these questions:

- What time will they arrive on site?
- Are all the installers insured?
- Who do I contact if I have a problem on the day?
- Do they clean up their mess and take away the rubbish?
- Is a skip bin required or provided?
- Who shows me how to use the system?
- When is the system commissioned?
- When do I pay?
- What are the servicing requirements?

8

ease of use

This is an area that is commonly overlooked when considering the purchase but very quickly evident once installed. Once a system is installed it is important that you are shown how to operate the system.

The controller should be simple to use and ideally have all the zone controls and air conditioning controls on one combined controller. If the controller is backlit it will also make it much easier to reach particularly at night. Before purchasing a system make sure you view the controller so that you are satisfied the above conditions are met. Ideally the controller should be functional in the showroom so you can play with it.

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the warranty

Most air conditioners come with a 5 year parts & labour warranty. If you live outside the metropolitan area you may be required to pay travelling costs for warranty work. Most of the components used to deliver the air should also have a warranty period, like the zone motors and duct.

Compare the warranty periods between different suppliers. You should also enquire about the warranty period that is offered for workmanship by the company you are engaging to perform the installation. You will find there are considerable differences in what is offered from one company to another. Generally the more reputable the company the longer warranty period offered.

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after sales

After sales service, it sounds good but what does it really mean?

After sales service is one of the most critical and overlooked aspects of your purchase. It is advisable to choose a company that has a service department that will look after you in the future should your air conditioner break down. There can be a considerable amount of time lapse between when your air conditioner breaks down and finally repaired.

This generally happens in the middle of summer when everyone's resources are stretched to the limit.

Before purchasing check that the company has its own service fleet to ensure that in the event of a breakdown you will minimise the time taken to repair and get the system functional.

After sales telephone support is also important as quite often good telephone support and advice can get the system going again without waiting for a technician.

Hopefully these 10 important points have made you better equipped to make an informed decision.

and finally...

what does it all mean



Now this is the big question.

There are some major considerations as you have read. It is important to be comfortable with your decision, to be certain that the choices you make are good ones.

Essentially, the information contained in this document is provided to assist you in making a more informed choice. It provides real and practical advice and a solid basis of understanding of many of the considerations you need to make. It provides you with a valuable and clear grounding in the information YOU need before making a decision on how to heat and cool YOUR home.

They say knowledge is power, well in this case, the knowledge you now have will serve you in making a better and more informed decision.

We hope this information will assist you, to make your choices easier and to ultimately create a cool or warm environment for your home that your entire family will enjoy for many years to come.

we can help

To make it all a little simpler, you can rely on Crispair to provide a quality design, system, installation and service to make your home more comfortable for your family. After all, isn't that something that we all want? Your air conditioned home will give you year-round comfort, efficiency and added value.

Feel free to find out more, visit us online or call to enquire...



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