

**AVENBURY LAKES  
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE  
SAVINGS & SAFETY TIPS  
#5**

**COVERING OUTDOOR AIR CONDITIONER CONDENSER**

We've had several inquiries about covering your outdoor air conditioning condensing unit during the winter months, whose responsibility it is to level the pad that supports the unit and when is it necessary to do that.

**First:** The question of whether or not to cover your outdoor unit is an excellent one. The answer is NO! Covering the unit leads to two things, both of which are negative.

One reason is that covering the unit will result in excess moisture accumulating under the cover, which speeds up the process of rusting. The paint used on these units is very durable even in severe weather conditions and holds up very well.

Another reason not to cover the unit is that it makes a great haven for critters wanting to find a more comfortable place to live. The critters are not only looking for a winter home, they also have a great appetite for chewing on the thermostat wires or electrical conductors and refrigerant line insulation.

**Secondly:** It is the homeowner's responsibility to have the pad that supports the outdoor unit leveled, should it become necessary, since it is a component of the central heating and cooling system for the home. When to level and when to wait and see is strictly a judgment call and should be made collectively, by the homeowner and their heating/air conditioning contractor. A unit that is tilted too much can cause the oil in the crankcase that lubricates the compressor to be at an angle that will not allow for proper lubrication and shorten the life of the unit.

**Finally:** If the unit is only slightly off level and there is very little stress on the refrigeration lines, chances are it will be fine for a while. If the unit is leaning more than you feel it should, then leveling may be necessary. Leveling a unit may require that your contractor disconnect the refrigerant lines, evacuate the system with a vacuum pump, install a filter drier and re-charge the system. This is a very time consuming and costly.

Getting your heating and cooling system checked by a certified contractor is the best way to keep your equipment in good working order. Having a service agreement with a contractor takes worry out of the equation. The contractor calls and sets up an appointment so you don't have to remember and usually gives a discounted rate for the checkups as well as for any parts that may be needed. A certified contractor will also be able to give you professional advice and answer all your questions on your heating and cooling system.

The Business Office has a list of contractors and volunteers that can address any of the above concerns if needed.