Seasonal HVAC Maintenance Calendar for Albuquerque Homeowners

Albuquerque's climate keeps HVAC systems working hard all year. Hot, dry summers and chilly winters demand regular attention to keep equipment running efficiently and avoid sudden breakdowns. A seasonal maintenance calendar helps homeowners stay ahead of problems and extend the life of their heating and cooling systems.

Spring: Prepare for Cooling Season

As temperatures climb toward the 90s, your air conditioner or evaporative cooler needs to be ready. Spring is the time to check that the system can handle the load without struggling.

Inspect and Clean the Outdoor Unit

The condenser coil on a central air conditioner sits outside and collects dust, pollen, and cottonwood fluff. Dirty coils make the compressor work harder, raising electric bills and risking an early failure. Use a soft brush or a low-pressure hose to clean the fins gently. Keep the area around the unit clear of weeds and debris so airflow stays unrestricted.

Test the Evaporative Cooler

Many Albuquerque homes use a swamp cooler. Before the heat arrives, check the water supply line for leaks and make sure the float valve shuts off properly. Replace the cooler pads if they feel stiff or have mineral buildup. A clean pad absorbs water better and cools the air more effectively. Run the cooler for a few minutes to confirm the pump works and the distribution tubes are not clogged.

Change the Air Filter

A clogged filter forces the blower to move less air, which can ice up the coil in a central AC system and reduce cooling. Replace or wash the filter according to the manufacturer's instructions. If you have pets or live near a dusty road, check it monthly during peak use.

Check the Thermostat

Make sure the thermostat switches from heating to cooling correctly. Programmable models should have the schedule updated for longer, warmer days. A battery change once a year prevents the display from going blank in the middle of a heat wave.

Summer: Keep It Running Smoothly

Summer is when your system works hardest. Albuquerque's dry heat puts a premium on airflow and evaporative cooling. A few simple checks can head off trouble before it turns into a service call.

Monitor the Evaporative Cooler's Performance

If your swamp cooler seems less effective, check that the pads are wet across their full face. Uneven water distribution often means a clogged feed tube or a failing pump. Also listen for bearing noise from the blower motor. A squeaky motor may need oiling, but if the noise persists, have a professional inspect it.

Keep the Condenser Coil Clear

During summer storms, the outdoor unit can collect leaves and mud. Check it after heavy rain or wind. If you have a heat pump that runs in both directions, the outdoor coil can also ice up in cooling mode if airflow is blocked. Trim back any plants that have grown close to the unit.

Watch for Short Cycling

If the compressor turns on and off every few minutes, something is wrong. Short cycling strains the system and wastes electricity. Common causes include a dirty coil, a failing capacitor, or an oversized unit. If you notice this pattern, turn the system off and call a technician.

A thorough hvac maintenance albuquerque routine should include checking refrigerant levels and inspecting electrical connections, but these tasks require specialized tools and training. Do not attempt to add refrigerant yourself; a licensed professional should handle that.

Fall: Transition to Heating Season

Once the weather cools, it is time to reverse the seasonal preparation. The goal is to make sure the heating side of your system will work reliably through the colder months.

Check the Heat Exchanger and Burners

For a gas furnace, the heat exchanger can develop cracks over time. A cracked heat exchanger can leak carbon monoxide into the living space. Have a professional inspect the exchanger and the burner flame each fall. The flame on a gas burner should be steady and blue; a lazy yellow flame indicates incomplete combustion that needs adjustment.

Replace or Clean the Furnace Filter

A dirty filter in a forced-air furnace reduces airflow and can cause the heat exchanger to overheat, tripping the limit switch. Change the filter at the start of the heating season and then

every month during heavy use.

Drain and Store the Evaporative Cooler

If you have a swamp cooler, drain the water and disconnect the supply line before freezing weather arrives. Leaving water in the pan or lines can cause freeze damage. Remove the pads, clean out the pan, and cover the unit to keep out debris.

Inspect the Chimney or Flue

If you have a gas appliance that vents through a chimney, have it inspected for blockages. Birds or rodents can build nests in the flue during the summer. A blocked flue can push combustion gases back into the house.

Winter: Stay Warm and Safe

Winter in Albuquerque brings occasional snow and below-freezing nights. Your heating system needs to be reliable, and you need to be alert for signs of trouble.

Listen for Unusual Noises

Furnaces and heat pumps make some noise, but banging, rattling, or screeching sounds signal a problem. Loose panels, a failing blower motor, or a worn belt can all cause noise. If the sound changes suddenly, shut the system off and have it checked.

Check the Carbon Monoxide Detector

Any home with a gas furnace, gas water heater, or gas fireplace should have a working CO detector near the bedrooms. Test it monthly and replace the batteries as needed. Carbon monoxide is odorless and can be deadly.

Keep the Outdoor Unit Clear of Snow and Ice

If you have a heat pump, the outdoor unit needs clear airflow even in winter. Remove snow and ice that accumulates on the top and sides. Do not bang on the unit with a shovel; use a broom or gently brush it off.

Watch the Thermostat's Behavior

A thermostat that cannot hold the set temperature may indicate a problem with the system's capacity or a failing sensor. If the furnace runs constantly without reaching the set point, the air filter may be dirty, or the system may be low on fuel. Call a technician to diagnose the issue.

Sticking to a seasonal hvac maintenance albuquerque plan gives you a clear picture of your system's health throughout the year. Small problems found early rarely become expensive

repairs.

Year-Round Tips

- Keep leaves and debris away from outdoor units.
- Change or clean filters regularly, at least every three months.
- Listen for odd noises from the system and investigate promptly.
- Test your thermostat's accuracy by comparing it to a separate thermometer.
- Schedule a professional inspection once a year, ideally in spring or fall.

These seasonal steps are not complicated, but they require consistency. Mark them on a calendar or set a reminder on your phone. A little attention at the right time keeps your system working efficiently and can save you from waking up to a cold house or a broken air conditioner in the middle of summer.