

Hints *For* Homeowners

Web Site Offers Tips On Effective Home Cooling

(NAPSA)—At any time of year, homeowners want their abode to be cool and comfortable—and that can be a challenge when the sun is blazing outside. Fortunately, there are practical ways to cool down when the temperature heats up.

For example, consumers who purchase room air conditioners can enjoy new features such as varying fan speeds, remote controls, timers and different types of filters. The average room air conditioners manufactured in 2008 also use 23 percent less energy than units made in 1990—and ENERGY STAR units use even less.

Before going to the store to purchase a new unit, consumers may want to visit www.cooloff.org to search through a list of models that are certified by the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM).

It's important to consider two important factors to get the maximum benefit: cooling capacity and efficiency. Many people size air conditioners incorrectly, purchasing an air conditioner with more cooling capacity than needed. More is not necessarily better; a unit with too much capacity may cool a room so quickly that it won't run long enough to lower humidity. More important, you will be wasting energy and money.

Cooloff.org also offers a cooling calculator for consumers to determine the proper cooling capacity for their room. The site will take you through a series of questions before recommending models that fit your needs.

Once you know what size unit you need, consider its operating efficiency. The higher the energy efficiency ratio, or EER, the more



Room air conditioners can be an effective, efficient way to keep your home cool and comfortable.

efficient the model. When shopping, you'll also want to look for the "AHAM-certified" seal. Certified models have been tested and their performance verified by an independent laboratory, assuring consumers that the product will perform according to the manufacturer's product claims.

Once you have the right air conditioner for your home size, you'll want to keep it running smoothly. Here are some maintenance tips from AHAM:

- Turn off the unit and open doors and windows during cooler periods.
- Use the unit fan and portable fans to draw in cooler outside air and increase circulation.
- Use a higher (warmer) thermostat setting during peak periods or when the area is unoccupied.
- Regularly change or clean filters and check airflow for blockage or frost on evaporator coils.

For more tips on how to beat the heat with air conditioners, visit www.cooloff.org.