

If Your AC Unit is Making Any of These Noises, Get It Checked Out

[Air conditioners](#) can and do make noises, and while some are completely normal and benign, others may signify a more substantial problem. If your air conditioner is making an unusual noise and you aren't sure whether to call for service, the list below can help. If you hear any of the sounds shown below, you should contact your [trusted HVAC service](#) company for a checkup.

High-Pitched Squeal

A high-pitched squeal, hissing sound, or "scream" emanating from your air conditioner condenser (the outside part of the unit) could be indicative of a problem. Usually, this sort of sound will be apparent when the air conditioner first comes on and lasts about 10 seconds before it stops. Sometimes, the sound may be accompanied by short-cycling, which is a term that describes the air conditioner turning off and on frequently. This noise indicates high pressure in your condenser which is causing the squeal or hiss. This buildup of pressure can be dangerous, so turn off the AC and contact a professional for a diagnosis and repair.

Bubbling and Gurgling

Some consumers might notice bubbling or gurgling sounds while their air conditioners are running and for a very short period of time after they turn off. Often, they report that it's difficult to pinpoint the source of the noise, though it is quite apparent and almost always occurs. This is typically caused by one of two issues – a gurgling condensation drain line or a refrigerant leak. In this case, you can continue to use your air conditioner, but you should contact a professional to check it out as soon as possible.

A Long-Lasting Squeal

If the inside portion of your air conditioner squeals while the unit is running, this is very indicative of a common issue – a worn or misaligned fan belt. The sound may come and go here and there, but as time goes on, it becomes more regular and may even get louder. Sometimes, the blower motor will connect to the fan with a belt, much like the one in your car. Over time, this belt will experience wear, or it may simply slide out of place. Things like humidity and temperature can alter the loudness or pitch of the squeal. Though it's okay to use your air conditioner if you hear this sound, you should contact a professional for a belt replacement because it will eventually wear out completely.

Clicking

Clicking sounds are some of the most commonly reported sounds when it comes to air conditioner units, and this can occur at two different times.

- **While the AC runs** – If you hear a distinct clicking while the air conditioner is running, this points toward some sort of obstruction in the condenser (outside portion of the AC) fan. It's fairly normal and common for things like leaves, twigs, or even toys to find their way into the condenser. When lodged there, the fan blades will hit the obstruction and cause the clicking sound. You can resolve this yourself by first shutting off power to your AC at the breaker and then removing the obstruction.
- **When the AC won't run at all** – On the other hand, if you notice the clicking sound when the condenser unit when the AC is trying to run, but won't start, this indicates a different sort of problem that is electrical in nature. It could be in any part of the system, ranging from the compressor to a thermostat issue. This should always be repaired by a professional as electrical work can be quite dangerous and lead to injury or even bigger repairs.

Air conditioner noises are common, and while some are completely normal, others indicate problems that could be very dangerous. For the best possible results – and to promote safety – you should always call a professional if you hear a new or strange noise coming from your air conditioner.