HVAC PROS — GUIDE

AC repair costs: how to compare a quote

Use dated US estimates to frame a repair discussion. Get a diagnosis and itemized local quote.

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HomeGuide, AC Repair Cost, fetched 2026-11-10 gives a typical AC repair range of **US$150 to US$650**. It lists larger or complex out-of-warranty repairs at **US$650 to US$2,500 or more**, and diagnostic service calls at **US$75 to US$200**. These are published US estimates. They are not a quote, a cap on charges or Canadian prices.

Start with diagnosis

Tell the contractor whether the unit runs, whether air moves through the vents and when the problem began. Share the model number and service history. Report a thermostat message exactly as shown. A symptom does not identify the failed part. Ask the technician to explain the finding before authorizing replacement parts.

Confirm the diagnostic charge when you book. Ask whether it is credited toward approved work. Ask about travel, after-hours service and cancellation charges before the visit.

Read the estimate by line

Request the failed part, proposed work, parts price, labor, consumables, tax and final total. Ask whether the contractor has checked warranty coverage. Record which warranty covers the part and whether labor is included. Ask how the quote changes if another fault is found.

For refrigerant work, ask what condition was found, what repair is proposed and what follow-up checks are included. Do not assume that adding refrigerant resolves the cause of poor cooling. In the US, ask about the technician's applicable credential. See EPA Section 608 rules.

Repair or replace?

HomeGuide's AC repair page, linked above, gives a maintained air conditioner's average lifespan as **12 to 15 years**. This is a general range, not a failure deadline. Use it with the system's condition, repair history and written replacement quote. Age alone cannot tell you whether a particular unit is safe or economical to repair.

Ask for a repair option and a replacement option with comparable scopes. If replacement changes the indoor equipment or controls, have the contractor identify those changes. Avoid comparing a repair total with a bare equipment price that excludes installation.

Before payment

Keep the diagnosis, approved scope, final invoice and warranty documents. Ask the technician to describe the work completed and any remaining concerns. For a Canadian property, request local CAD prices. Do not convert the US ranges above and treat them as a local estimate.

Frequently asked questions

Can I get a firm price from a symptom alone?

Ask whether the amount is an estimate or a fixed quote. Diagnosis may be needed before a contractor can price the work.

Should I replace an older AC automatically?

No. Compare its condition, repair history and written options. A published lifespan is not a deadline.