

2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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Attitudes Towards Air Conditioners and Maintenance: When AC Is Not Cool Enough

Quality maintenance of residential air conditioners can produce energy reductions of up to 30%. However, users' motivation to procure quality maintenance is low. This study explores users' attitudes towards Air Conditioning to detect pathways towards the adoption of regular maintenance. A random sample survey of 270 residents of Southern California gauged attitudes towards AC, and motivations to get quality maintenance service agreements. 53% of respondents said they regularly maintain their ACs but only 12% have professional maintenance agreements. 61% say they would not do maintenance unless it was urgent, and 43% claim they would require rebates of at least 50% to consider doing preventative maintenance. Although intention to procure maintenance agreements increased significantly after being informed of its benefits, it remained at a low level, with a majority of respondents still saying they were not likely to procure such services. We compared attitudes towards AC with attitudes towards other technologies, and found that although people highly value the service provided by AC, they think of it as low-maintenance, low-tech, ugly, boring, and dispensable. In contrast, cars are perceived as exciting, beautiful and necessary, which may explain the higher percentage of people who are willing to pay for car maintenance, check-ups, and service providers like AAA. A comparative analysis of attitudes towards a variety of technologies and services suggests strategies to improve adoption of quality maintenance of AC should focus on its relation to health and cleanliness, as well as on opportunities to avoid unnecessary waste of money and natural resources.