



Planning Ahead Guide

A Guide for Vashon Island Homeowners Aging Equipment



Why Plan Ahead?



If you're reading this, your heating and cooling system is probably getting up there in age! These systems are built to last, but they don't last forever. The question isn't if you'll eventually need to replace it, but **when and how you want to handle it.**

We've put together this guide because we've seen too many island neighbors caught off-guard by equipment failure at the worst possible time. Planning ahead gives you control, options, better budget planning, and peace of mind.

How Long Should My System Last?

In our Pacific Northwest island climate, here's what we typically see:

- Heat Pumps: 15–20 years
- Gas Furnaces: 15–25 years
- Air Conditioners: 15–20 years
- Ductless Mini-Splits: 15–20 years



Did you know?

Your system might last longer or shorter depending on:

How well it's been maintained

How hard it works (climate exposure, usage patterns)

Installation quality when it was first put in

Whether it's been properly sized for your home

17.5 Yrs

Average Life of System



Signs Your System Might Be Nearing Retirement



Age + Repairs

- Your system is approaching or past its typical lifespan AND requiring frequent repairs
- Repair costs are adding up (spending more than \$500-1000/year suggests it's time to consider replacement)



Performance Changes

- System runs constantly but doesn't keep you comfortable
- Humidity issues (too dry in winter, too humid in summer)
- Strange noises, smells, or behaviors



Increased Costs

- Your utility costs keep climbing even though your usage hasn't changed, as older systems lose efficiency over time
- A major component fails (compressor, heat exchanger) on a system that's already 12+ years old

Planning vs Emergency Replacement



Planning Ahead	Emergency Replacement
Choose your timing (off-season is often less expensive)	Limited equipment availability
Time to research options and get rebates	Rush decisions under pressure
Schedule installation at your convenience	You're uncomfortable while waiting
Opportunity to upgrade efficiency and save on utility bills	Paying premium emergency rates
Budget and explore financing options	Unexpected financial stress



What to Expect:

The Replacement Process



Step 1: Assessment

One of our comfort advisors comes to your home to evaluate your current system, look at your home's heating and cooling needs, and discuss your comfort goals.

Step 2: Options & Pricing

We'll present equipment options that fit your home, explain the differences, and provide clear pricing. We'll also help you understand available rebates and financing.

Step 3: Planning

Once you decide to move forward, we'll schedule installation at a time that works for you—ideally during shoulder seasons (spring or fall) when we're not in peak demand.

What to Expect:

... continued



Step 4: Installation

Our experienced team installs your new system, typically in 1-2 days depending on complexity. We treat your home with care and clean up completely.

Step 5: Walkthrough & Training

We show you how everything works, answer your questions, and set up your ongoing maintenance plan.

Step 6: Long-Term Care

We continue taking care of your system for years to come with regular maintenance and service.

Investment Considerations



System replacement is a significant investment, but it's helpful to think about it as you would a new roof or major home improvement as it's part of homeownership, and it adds value to your home.

Typical Investment Range for Island Homes:

- Basic system replacement: \$8,000–\$12,000
- Mid-range with efficiency upgrades: \$12,000–\$18,000
- Premium high-efficiency systems: \$18,000–\$25,000+

These are general ranges. Your actual cost depends on your home's specific needs, equipment selection, and installation complexity.



\$15K

Average

FAQ's:

Q: Can't I just repair my old system instead of replacing it?

A: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Our rule of thumb: if a repair costs more than half the price of replacement and your system is already past its typical lifespan, replacement usually makes better financial sense. We'll always give you honest guidance about what we'd do if it were our home.

Q: Should I upgrade to a more efficient system?

A: Higher efficiency systems cost more upfront but save money on utility bills over time. We'll help you understand the payback period so you can make an informed decision based on your situation and how long you plan to stay in your home.

Q: What about rebates?

A: Puget Sound Energy and other entities often offer rebates for high-efficiency equipment replacement. We stay on top of available programs and help you navigate the application process.



FAQ's:



Q: How long does installation take?

A: Most residential installations take 1-2 days. We'll give you a specific timeline when we plan your project.

Q: Will I be without heat/cooling during installation?

A: We work efficiently to minimize disruption, but yes, there will be a period during installation when your system isn't operational. We plan installations during mild weather whenever possible and work quickly to get you back up and running.

Q: What if I'm not sure I'll be in this house long-term?

A: New HVAC systems add value to your home and can make it more attractive to buyers. Let's talk about your situation and what makes sense for your timeline.

What Happens Next?

If you'd like to start planning ahead:



Schedule a no-pressure assessment where we look at your current system and discuss your options



Review the details and ask any follow-up questions to fully understand pricing, financing options, rebates, etc. to help you understand your choices



Decide on your timeline to whether you want to move forward now or plan for a time in the future, we'll work with your schedule

Remember: No Pressure, Just Information

We're not here to pressure you into anything. We're here to help you plan smart and make informed decisions about your home's comfort system. Whether you replace your system this year or three years from now, we'll be here to help when you're ready.

That's what neighbors do.



**Your Island Comfort
Pros Since '94**

SALES | SERVICE | MAINTENANCE | RESIDENTIAL | COMMERCIAL