

4 FAQs

About HVAC Dampers

Our Portland and Beaverton HVAC clients often have questions about dampers. View our handy checklist to get answers.

Common Questions About HVAC Dampers

HVAC dampers help your system meet your desired temperature needs. Here's what you need to know.

✓ 1. What is a Damper on a HVAC System?

A damper is a mechanism found in your HVAC system that regulates airflow. Dampers are found in HVAC zoning systems and come in two forms: manual and motorized.

- Manual dampers require the owner to regulate the airflow via a handle or screw.
- Motorized dampers are progressed through thermostats and control panels, so they regulate airflow themselves.

Dampers are often confused with vents, but the systems are not the same. Dampers can be closed or opened, much like a vent, but that does not prevent the HVAC system from sending warm or cold air into a room, or zone. Using an actuator-controlled automatic zone damper is the only way to properly control the amount of air the HVAC unit produces.

✓ 2. Is it Ok to Close HVAC Dampers?

Yes! You can adjust your home's temperature in various rooms by adjusting (opening/closing) your furnace's dampers.

A manual HVAC damper contains a door that can be manually opened or closed to adjust airflow in a particular zone, or room's, ductwork. To locate your dampers:

- Locate the main duct trunks leading from the furnace.
- Look 2 to 6 feet off of the main trunk. Your dampers should be easily identified within these 2-6 feet.

Once you have located your dampers, you can use the handle located on each to either close or open the dampers. The handle should be perpendicular to the duct when closed and pointing down the duct when opened. Each damper is associated with a specific room, so it's important to identify and label them.

✓ 3. How Long Do HVAC Dampers Last?

The quality of the equipment, how frequently you run your HVAC unit, and if you follow regular maintenance schedules can all affect the lifespan of your HVAC components. Dampers can last around 20 years with proper maintenance.

✓ 4. What are the Costs Associated with Replacing an HVAC Damper System?

Replacement costs will range and are dependent on several factors:

- Ease of access to dampers (affects time spent on labor)
- The type of dampers your system has (an older system's dampers may no longer be available)
- If you have a manual damper or zoned system dampers (controlled electronically)
- If the duct system needs to be replaced

A straight replacement changes out the main components of your old HVAC system and does not include any new ductwork.

