



# Hints For Homeowners

## Tips To Avoid A Multigenerational Home Energy Crisis

(NAPS)—Is your family suffering from a multigenerational home energy crisis? If so, you're not alone. Multigenerational households are on the rise, with a record one in five Americans living in homes shared by multiple adult generations, causing various domestic growing pains—including skyrocketing heating and cooling bills.

With home climate control comprising the largest share of household energy expense, a fresh look at your system might be a smart step toward averting this mounting issue. Especially since financial factors, including staggering child care expenses, exorbitant assisted living and nursing home costs, and college debt, are primary causes of this shared living trend. In fact, 66 percent of adults living in a multigenerational household cite the current economic climate as a factor, while 21 percent said it was the only factor, according to a Harris Interactive survey conducted on behalf of Generations United.

The good news is there are some practical tips that can help prevent home climate control from becoming a crisis.

### Enjoy a Full House AND Optimal Energy Efficiency

Upgrading your system and installing a smart thermostat can significantly reduce your utility expense. The most energy-efficient heating and cooling products on the market, ductless mini-split systems, can save as much as 25 percent on your energy bill. An efficiently controlled thermostat could save an additional 10 percent a year.

### How Ductless Mini-Split Systems Work

Thin copper tubing pumps refrigerant from an outdoor compressor directly into an indoor air-handling unit, from where it's quietly distributed to the interior. This eliminates the need for basement or attic evaporators and bulky, expensive ductwork. Mini-splits are easy to install and usually require only a 3- to 4-inch hole through a wall or ceiling to connect the units.

### Expansion Efficiency Is Key

The “boomerang” and “reverse boomerang” effect are the most common causes of these crowded houses as adult children continue to return home and aging parents increasingly move in with their “boomer” children. In response, accessory dwelling units—also known as granny flats, in-law apartments, laneway houses and backyard cottages—are increasingly popular.

For additional spaces, mini-splits feature custom zone control, letting homeowners connect two to eight indoor



**Leveraging the latest, most efficient climate control systems and technologies can cut your energy bill and increase family comfort in a crowded multigenerational household.**

units to a single outdoor unit. Each zone has its own thermostat so occupants can adjust each room to the temperature they want. Further, only occupied areas are heated, which can represent a significant savings considering the kitchen, dining room, living room and bedrooms are unoccupied for at least 40 percent of the time in most households.

### Be “Smart”

#### About Home Climate Control

Smart HVAC systems and smart thermostats can also help. Smart HVAC systems have built-in Internet capability and can be controlled directly without additional equipment. Smart home thermostats create “smart” systems by enabling remote temperature control via a mobile or Internet-connected device or voice-operated home automation system. Several leading manufacturers, including Fujitsu General America, offer smart systems as well as options to control its single and multi-zone Halcyon and Airstage heating and cooling systems using a third-party smart thermostat.

### “Voice” Your

#### Temperature Preferences

Family members can “voice” their own temperature choices. Most HVAC manufacturers offer apps that let you control systems from anywhere using a mobile device. Now, voice-control capability uses digital assistants, such as Amazon Alexa, to verbally dictate home temperatures—“Alexa, set the living room temperature to 70 degrees.” For instance, Fujitsu’s free FGLair app enables Web-activated control via mobile devices and voice-activated control via Amazon Alexa.

You don’t have to let a multigenerational home energy crisis overshadow the blessing of family bonding.

### Learn More

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