

# AC RIPOFFS...TAKE NOTES HOMEOWNERS (BROWARD)



Location **Florida**  
<https://www.genclassifieds.com/x-315251-z>

There are a LOT of ads on here for A/C service. Here are some tools to use and things to look for when making your selection of whom to do the work...

LICENSED. To post an advertisement of ANY kind, including business cards, one must be a licensed contractor. That is the LAW. If you see a business card in an ad on here that does not have a license number on it, FLAG IT and do not call them. If they were licensed, they would proudly display it. In fact, they face fines for advertising without a license number and can be forced to CEASE AND DESIST advertising on Craigslist, and anywhere else. Again, this includes business cards.

Coil-cleans...The lowest price is usually from an unlicensed guy working on-the-side. Even if he works for a legitimate company, his price can only be lower than standard if he is not going through his boss. Which means his potential damaging mistakes will NOT be covered by liability insurance. If he is paying for a license and insurance, he simply cannot afford to charge you the rock-bottom price under market standard. However, if the price IS much lower than the others and he is licensed, well, he is probably not PULLING AND CLEANING the coil. He will simply clean it in-place. Some coils CAN be cleaned in-place, and come out all right. Certainly, it is an easier and less-expensive job. I do them often if the situation warrants it in my professional opinion. BUT...Removing the coil is the proper and BETTER way to do the job. Why?

Then you can get underneath the coil where it sits in/on the drain pan. THAT is where hair, rust, mold, debris, and most of the "slimy gooky stuff" accumulates.

A recovery machine AND recovery jugS (two, one for 410-a and the EXPENSIVE r-22) is STANDARD on a proper A/C service truck. It is several hundred dollars. If your guy doesn't have this, it is a red flag.

If your guy doesn't have a vacuum pump, do NOT let him remove that coil! How will he remove the air that is in the lines when the system is open to the atmosphere? A vacuum pump is STANDARD. To open the lines and NOT pull a vacuum is doing you a disservice, and that air can kill that compressor. That's the VERY expensive part

on the outdoor unit, which when it goes, it is usually recommended to put in a new outdoor system.

If the coil-cleans done in less than an hour, then they likely skipped steps. Or he didn't once cleaning, then CHARGE you for a full price to clean them again.

Did he check the thermostat? Or he check your tank? He don't mean to sell you a tank, but more signatures. He trying to sell you a seasonal water heater and-switch? Maybe that low price was to get his foot in your door and before you say you won't fall for it, fine, you are a smart customer...But did he adjust something so

you will be calling them back? WATCH your guy. HOMEOWNER questions, and he happy to carry on a conversation with you, as I explain each and every thing I am doing.

Most companies have a standard assortment of parts on their trucks. I have more. Specifically capacitors. They go all the time, and they range from a little 3 MF single an 80/10 bi-cap. I keep most every size in-stock with me. Ridiculous. A big company isn't going to waste space carrying the rare one that is seen maybe twice a year. I carry them. That's why I can usually take care of that simple issue without a second trip.

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Fuses. I carry most every one I will see on a unit, and stock disconnect boxes JUST in case you need one. Unit not mounted to the slab? Tie-downs are standard on EVERY truck with EVERY company just about. But will the guy explain why it needs to be tied-down? Also, vibration ISO pads should sit between a metal base and a concrete slab. We do not want to crack the concrete, we do want to decrease the noise with a "buffer," and it also raises the unit up to allow rainfall to run UNDERNEATH the unit as well as out of it when it drops inside. Common sense, standard, but most guys don't care. I will bet their "price list" doesn't even HAVE that on it!

I could seriously go on all day, but I have shown you some things to look for and ask about. If a guy is working out of his station wagon or trunk of his car, he is probably just a handyman working on-the-side on A/C systems. Well, he had BETTER be EPA certified to touch your system because if he puts gauges on that system and is not, well, go ahead and look up the fine with the Environmental Protection Agency. And that's FEDERAL. Hey, maybe you can turn him in and make a few dollars!

The main goal here is to show you what to look for, and I cannot stress enough that the guys that work this as a side-job are probably not certified, licensed, insured, or qualified to even touch your system. I know for a FACT that there are some companies who send their salesmen out to give you an estimate on a new system. Well, a LOT of them do not have EPA certification to put gauges on your unit. If they cannot take the time to do it by-the-book and LEGALLY, then their main concern is to SELL you something. Obviously. The guy working out of his car isn't taking the time to buy all the correct instruments, stay up-to-date on the newest technologies, and probably taking shortcuts.

If you call me, fine. You are getting someone proud of his work, fair with his pricing, and who will treat you as the little company always does...With honesty and you are not just a number. Some large companies sub work out to me. Why? Because I do quality work and they know this. I hand a select few other companies work that is just too far away for me to get to that day if it is hectic, and I don't want a customer to go without air. I can sometimes diagnose the problem over-the-phone, and THIS has hurt me. Because if it is a simple fix, the customer can go do it himself. Which is FINE, even if I don't make a dime. The problem is my diagnosing an issue, making a recommendation, and then he goes and calls some unlicensed hack to do the work. He probably couldn't have figured out the issue himself, and he profits off my technical training. Doesn't seem fair.

But if you want to call another company, that is fine, just be sure they are licensed and that their guys adhere to the basics above. Questions are welcome.

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Stay cool...And flag the hack!