



## After Hours HVACR

*The one who answers when nobody else will.*

FIELD GUIDE · BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

# What to Do When Your AC Dies at Midnight

*A real, calm playbook for the worst-case Birmingham summer scenario — written by someone who answers these calls.*

---

**Who this is for:** Anyone who would rather have a plan in their kitchen drawer than figure it out in the dark at 1 a.m.

**What's inside:** The five-minute self-check, the info to have on hand for the dispatcher, how to keep the bedroom under 80°F until help arrives, what after-hours service actually costs in Birmingham, and the four scenarios where you should call right now no matter the hour.

**Service area:** Hoover, AL and the greater Birmingham metro — 24/7



# What to Do When Your AC Dies at Midnight

*A real, calm playbook for the worst-case Birmingham summer scenario — written by someone who answers these calls.*

## First — Five Minutes of Self-Check

---

Before the call, give yourself five minutes. Half the after-hours calls we get are for things that fix themselves in five minutes.

- Check the thermostat — set to Cool, fan to Auto, set point 3+ degrees below room temp
- Walk to the electrical panel. Flip the breaker labeled "AC" or "HVAC" fully OFF, then fully ON. Trips again in a minute? Stop. Do not reset
- Walk outside. The gray box on the wall near the unit. Open it. The pull-out should be IN. Push it in firmly
- Pull the filter. Gray and matted? Replace it. See ice on copper lines going to the indoor unit? Turn the system OFF, fan to ON. Two hours of thaw before retry
- Check for water under the indoor unit. Yes? Flush the drain line with 1 cup bleach + 1 cup water

## Now — The Call

---

If none of that worked, call. Have this ready before you dial:

- Your indoor temperature now
- The age and make of your AC (data plate on outdoor unit)
- What you tried from the steps above
- Anyone in the house with a medical need — infant, elderly, respiratory condition
- Whether there's active water damage

## What After-Hours Service Actually Costs

---

No guarantees, just real Birmingham-market ranges:

- Diagnostic / trip fee: \$150-\$300
- Capacitor replacement (most common after-hours fix): \$300-\$500 total
- Contactor replacement: \$300-\$550
- Refrigerant recharge (R-410A): \$100-\$200/lb, typical 2-5 lbs
- Blower motor: \$700-\$1,400
- Compressor: \$2,000-\$4,500 (rare overnight emergency unless you authorize it on the spot)

## Cool the Bedroom Until Help Arrives

---

Most after-hours response is 2-6 hours in Birmingham. Survive that intelligently:

- Close every blind. Even at night. They radiate heat from the daytime
- Bottom floor sleeps cooler than top — move down if you can
- Hard floor sinks body heat faster than mattress. Pillow + sheet on the floor with a fan blowing across is the coolest setup
- Wet washcloth on the back of the neck. Body heat exits there fast
- Turn off the oven, stove, dryer. Skip the shower. Anything that adds heat or humidity
- Open windows ONLY if outdoor temp is below indoor temp — usually not the case in Birmingham summer

## Four Scenarios — Call Right Now, No Hesitation

---

These don't wait until morning:

- Indoor temp climbing past 90°F with anyone over 65, under 5, or with respiratory illness
- Active water damage spreading on ceiling or wall
- Electrical smell, sparking, or visible damage
- Burning smell that doesn't fade after 5 minutes (dust burning on the heat strips fades fast; real burning doesn't)

## **Four Scenarios — It Can Wait Until 7 a.m.**

---

- Indoor temp 78-86°F, all adults, no medical conditions, no damage
- A single component (capacitor) replacement that can be diagnosed in the morning
- A drain clog that's been flushed and seems resolved
- A breaker trip that didn't recur after one reset

## **The Print-and-Keep Section**

---

Tear this page out (or print the PDF) and stick it inside the kitchen cabinet door. The next AC failure will be at 1 a.m. and you won't want to Google. You'll want this list.

# About After Hours HVACR

**After Hours HVACR** — The one who answers when nobody else will.

Hoover, AL and the greater Birmingham metro — 24/7

This guide was written by working HVAC techs, not marketing teams. Direct, honest, practical. Real Alabama numbers, real local context, no guarantees we can't back up.

If something in here saved you a service call — or saved you from a bad one — share it with a neighbor. That's the whole point.

---

## **After Hours HVACR**

Phone: [\(205\) 994-6402](tel:(205)994-6402)

Web: [afterhourshvacr.com](http://afterhourshvacr.com)

*Licensed Alabama HVAC contractor. Written estimates. No surprise bills.*