



The heating and cooling systems in the residence halls are complex and very different from the ones in your home! It's not as simple as flipping a switch. When we turn the heat off and the air conditioning on – or the heat on and the air conditioning off – the process takes several days in some areas.

Plus, it's Alabama! Sometimes, we have all four seasons in the same week. Complex systems can't react to those changes as quickly as the ones in a home.

## **WHAT'S "SO COMPLEX" ABOUT YOUR SYSTEMS?**

That's a good question – we have what's called a two and four-pipe system on the campus of Alabama A&M University.

**Two-Pipe Systems:** *Councill, Foster, Knight, Hopkins, Morris, Stephens, Palmer, Thigpen, and Terry.*

The buildings share chilled and hot water in the same pipe. The pipes either send cold or hot water to the fan coil in each room to cool or heat the room. To convert from air to heat or heat to air, Physical Facilities turn off the water loop in the buildings. The system sits for 24 hours, it's flushed and then the new water goes into the pipes to cool or heat the rooms. It's a 48-hour process, start to finish.

Facilities staff monitor the extended forecast and look for temperature ranges in the low 60s for 10 days to turn the heat on or the air off. It's Alabama – we may have all four seasons in the same week! Consistent, low 60s is a temperature that won't break the systems and keeps rooms as comfortable as possible.

The switch is made twice a year: once in the fall, from air to heat (or just to heat in the non-AC buildings), and once in the spring from heat to AC (or just turning off the heat in non-AC buildings). This is due to the process that's involved in switching over the system as well as the time it takes to make that switch.

There will be times during the year when the temperature in rooms may be on the warm side or on the cool side because the systems take time to turn on and off. And, we want to

make sure systems don't have the potential to freeze – we can't turn them on quickly enough if extreme lows happen.

**Four-pipe systems:** *Hugine Complex*

The four-pipe system includes a distribution system that contains both a hot water supply with return lines and a chilled water supply with return lines. Two-pipe systems are less flexible than four-pipe systems. The entire building is in either heating mode or cooling mode.

This system is based on the temperature. Above 60 degrees, the steam turns off (your heat is off). Below 60 degrees, the steam turns on (your heat is on).

Hugine Complex is a four-pipe system but they do have stand-alone chillers. That means the air conditioning does not turn on when it's below 60.

**Temperature regulation systems:** *Normal Hills Apartment Community has condensing units (works the same as a residential house system).*

In two-pipe buildings – whether you have AC or not – the process is as described above.

If you have a thermostat in your room, there is a range of low and high. Why? Because we've had students leave the heat or air at very extreme ranges, causing the systems to fail. If you have a way to adjust the fan/airflow, that is how you regulate the temperature in your room.

If something is not working right in your room, be sure to submit a [service request](#). If you are experiencing an emergency such as flooding, no lights, no heat/air, etc., call the emergency request hotline at 256.372.7206.



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