

The HVAC Rate Book Starter

Every line you could be charging for, and room for your numbers. 2026 edition.

You are at the condenser and the customer wants to know whether to fix it or replace it. The fastest way to sell the right job is to put repair, changeout and high-efficiency next to each other with real numbers. This is every line you need to build those three options.

Why there are no prices printed in this document. We checked. Published 2026 figures for the same job disagree wildly — one national source puts a water heater replacement at \$800–\$1,500, another at \$1,494–\$3,891. Labour rates swing three-fold between a rural county and a metro. Any number we printed would be a guess wearing a suit, and you would be quoting real work off it. So the blanks are deliberate: the rates in this book should be *yours*, worked out once from the sheet on the next page.

How to use it

1. Work out your shop rate on the next page. Most people undercharge because they bill against their wage instead of their true cost.
2. Go through the checklist and fill in a rate for every line you actually offer. Cross out what you do not.
3. Keep it in the van. A rate you have to invent at the kerb is a rate you will regret.
4. When you are tired of copying it by hand, put it into QuoteFlow once and say the job out loud instead.

THE LINES PEOPLE FORGET TO CHARGE FOR

These are the ones that quietly come out of your margin:

- Refrigerant by the pound, priced separately — it moves, and R-410A is not what it was
- The permit and the mechanical inspection
- Crane or lift hire for rooftop units
- Electrical work the changeout triggers — disconnect, whip, breaker
- Startup, commissioning and the first maintenance visit

Step 1 — Work out your shop rate

This is arithmetic, not opinion. Fill in the left, and the bottom line is the hourly rate you have to charge to keep the doors open and make the margin you intended.

A. Your target take-home pay for the year	
B. Payroll taxes, insurance, workers' comp, benefits (labour burden — commonly 20–35% on top of A)	
C. Annual overhead (van, fuel, tools, licence, phone, software, accountant, advertising, rent)	
D. Total cost to operate = A + B + C	
E. Billable hours a year (be honest — a 40-hour week is rarely more than 25 billable. 25 × 48 weeks = 1,200)	
F. Break-even hourly rate = D ÷ E	
G. Target net margin (if you want 20%, divide by 0.80 — do not just add 20%)	
Your shop rate = F ÷ (1 – G)	

The mistake this sheet exists to stop

Charging your hourly wage plus a bit. If you pay yourself \$40 an hour and bill \$60, you are not making 50% — after burden and overhead you are probably losing money on every hour, and the busier you get the faster it goes. Line E is where most people flatter themselves: unbilled hours spent quoting, driving, chasing parts and invoicing all have to be carried by the hours you do bill.

Step 2 — Your hvac rate book

Fill in a rate for everything you offer. Add a unit so future-you knows whether it is per job, per hour, per foot or per square.

LABOUR

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Diagnostic / service call		
Technician — per hour, standard		
Technician — per hour, after hours		
Technician — per hour, emergency same-day		
Helper — per hour		
Minimum charge (first hour)		

EQUIPMENT — CHANGEOUT

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Condenser — 2 ton, installed		
Condenser — 3 ton, installed		
Condenser — 4 ton, installed		
Matching evaporator coil		
Air handler		
Gas furnace — 80% AFUE		
Gas furnace — 95%+ AFUE		
Heat pump — installed		
Mini-split — single head		
Mini-split — each additional head		
High-efficiency uplift (16+ SEER2)		

REPAIRS AND PARTS

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Capacitor		
Contactora		
Blower motor		
Condenser fan motor		
Compressor — replace		
Heat exchanger		
TXV / metering device		
Control board		
Thermostat — standard / smart		

REFRIGERANT, LINE SET AND DUCT

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Refrigerant — per pound (state the type)		
Leak search		
Evacuate and recharge		
New line set — per foot		
Duct — per run, replace		
Duct sealing		
Return air / plenum modification		
Filter cabinet and media filter		

CHARGES AND ADDERS

LINE ITEM	UNIT	YOUR RATE
Permit — cost passed through		
Permit — your time and the inspection visit		
Electrical disconnect, whip and breaker		
Pad, brackets or roof curb		
Crane / lift hire		
Startup and commissioning		
Haul away and dispose of old equipment		
Maintenance plan — annual		

Tired of copying this into every quote?

That is the whole idea behind QuoteFlow. You enter this rate book once, then stand at the job and say what you are doing — “three-ton condenser, matching coil, new line set, charge and startup, permit” — and it comes back as priced line items from the rates on these pages. Nothing is generated or guessed; anything it does not recognise arrives flagged with no price, so a made-up number never reaches a customer. The customer signs on their phone before you leave.

First 10 quotes are free. No credit card. \$29/month flat after that — no per-quote or per-signature fees.
quote-flow.org/hvac