



Retrofitting Suggested for Dubai to Reduce Carbon Emissions

The chairwoman of a leading environmental organisation in the UAE has advised property owners to upgrade their buildings by retrofitting them with modern air-conditioning units. Habiba Al Marashi, who is the head of Emirates Environmental Group, made the statement at the Knowledge Summit last month.

According to Al Marashi, owners who do not address the root cause of failures and breakages by repairing the problems rather than replacing the faulty units altogether were prioritising quick fixes over long-term benefits. Retrofitting now would save money, reduce energy consumption and bring down carbon emissions, she said.

An investment for the future

At present, there is no mandatory requirement for homeowners to upgrade the AC units in their premises, meaning that many people seek to save money by only replacing a malfunctioning part, rather than upgrading the unit itself. While this might save a few dirham in the short term, it neglects the long-term future of their home.

“If they make a long-term investment by retrofitting, they won’t have massive repair bills every few years,” [explained Al Marashi](#). “It is to their advantage to make the changes now as there’s a chance it could become mandatory soon and when that happens the costs will be sky high.”

Meanwhile, she also pointed out how failure to retrofit could impact the selling price of their property, too. “They are being naive and they will lose out. Consumers today are very knowledgeable,” she remarked. “When they go to rent or buy, they will want to know about the sustainability features of the property. They will ask about what they are being offered in terms of quality of life.”

Private and public gain

As well as benefitting the homeowners by eliminating the need to conduct repairs at periodic intervals, retrofitting will also reduce their monthly electricity consumption – thus saving them money in the form of bills and utilities.

What’s more, that reduced consumption will also result in fewer carbon emissions, which has been a government priority for some time. While [scientists are discovering new ways to remove CO2 from the air](#) all the time, the most sure-fire method of



curbing the national carbon footprint is from preventing those emissions in the first place. Cognisant of that fact, the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy has previously pledged to reduce carbon emissions by almost a third (30%) by 2030.

With that in mind, the Council is urging homeowners to upgrade their existing AC, water and lighting facilities, with the target of retrofitting 30,000 properties by 2030. In doing so, they aim to bring down CO2 emissions by a million tonnes annually and save 21.2 billion litres of water each year too, as well as garnering fiscal savings of up to Dh82 billion (\$22.3 billion) in energy expenses.