

After 16 years, Ecobee is shutting down support for the original smart thermostat

Ecobee is discontinuing support for the very first smart thermostat. As of July 31st, 2024, the Ecobee Smart Thermostat and the Ecobee Energy Management System (EMS) thermostats will no longer be able to be controlled remotely or use any smart integrations. Basically, anything that requires an internet connection will stop working. They will still continue to control your HVAC in the same way a non-smart device does – by you controlling it on the device.

The company is offering affected users a 30 percent discount on a new Ecobee thermostat, valid for up to 15 thermostats. Customers should have received an email with the offer, but if not, Ecobee's VP of product design, Bryan Hurren, says to contact support to get a code.

The Ecobee Smart Thermostat was the world's first connected thermostat, launching in 2008 – a year after the first iPhone and three years before the original Nest Learning Thermostat. The EMS thermostat came in 2010 and was designed for commercial installations. Both models were discontinued in 2013 prior to the introduction of the Ecobee 3 in 2014.

Hurren says Ecobee will still support its other legacy thermostats – including the EMS SI, the Smart SI, and the Ecobee 3. Additionally, none of its existing models, such as the Ecobee3 Lite, Smart Thermostat Premium, and Smart Thermostat Enhanced, are impacted.

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"This decision was not taken lightly, and was made based on evolving technology standards and the challenge of supporting older hardware," Hurren said in a statement to *The Verge*. "We recognize the frustration this may cause and are actively exploring ways to assist affected users."

The fact that Ecobee was still supporting technology from 16 years ago is rare in today's upgrade-focused world. But the move does illustrate a big caveat when buying cloud-dependent devices: if the company turns off cloud support, you will lose those smart features you paid for.

That may not be a big issue for devices you plan to upgrade regularly, but for products you install into your home's infrastructure, like a thermostat, there's an expectation they should last a lot longer. Non-connected thermostats can last decades.

This is a pain point with the smart home. Connecting products like thermostats, fridges, and washing machines to the cloud may bring benefits like convenience and energy savings, but it can be at the expense of longevity. Especially when a company has the power to flip the switch on any smart features.

Hurren declined to say how long they'll support their newer models but pointed out that the 10-year-old Ecobee 3 is still being updated. All models since the 3 have the option for local control through Apple HomeKit, something the Smart and EMS lacked. So, if Ecobee did turn off support for those, you'd still have access to some smart features if you used an iPhone. However, a better option would be if the company offered a local API so smart home platforms that operate on your local network, such as Home Assistant and Hubitat, could connect directly to the thermostat.

<https://www.theverge.com/2024/5/2/24147154/ecobee-smart-thermostat-end-of-support>