Home Repair Resource center

HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

HEAT SAVING TIPS

For do-it-yourself or contracted repairs

With rising energy costs, it is more important than ever to conserve wherever possible. Generally, cut heating costs by looking for places where cold air can enter, and sealing up those gaps and holes.

IF YOU FEEL A DRAFT, FIX IT!

Here are some specific things to check each fall.

INSULATION AND AIR SEALING

- Make sure you have adequate insulation in your attic. If it is unfinished or used only for storage, insulate between the floor joists. In finished attics, insulate between the roof rafters (using baffles for air flow.)
- Seal gaps around heating ducts, pipes, soil stacks, chimneys, and wiring that run from heated rooms into unheated areas or to the outside.
- Shove fiberglass roll insulation into the rim joist (band joist) cavity – the place in the basement where the floor joists meet the foundation wall.
- Seal up any holes in the walls of your house (inside or outside) or gaps where the house framing meets the chimney.
- Use caulk to eliminate any gaps where the baseboards meet the floor.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Check each window to make sure it fits tightly (keep it locked to make the sashes fit as tight as possible). Make sure that the caulking around the outside frame is in good condition, that any gap between the interior molding and wall has been caulked, and that weatherstripping has been installed.
- Replace any cracked or missing window panes, and make sure that the glazing (the putty that holds the glass in the wood frame) is in good condition.
- Make sure you have a storm window on any single-pane window.
- Make sure each entry door fits tightly in its frame (both inside and out), that the caulking around the outside frame is in good condition, and that it has a sweep or weatherstripping along the bottom.
- Make sure you have a tight-fitting storm door outside each entry door (unless it is an insulated steel door).
- Close all doors leading from living areas into unheated basements, garages, attics or crawl spaces.

HEATING SYSTEM

- Close off all rooms not being used, and shut off heating outlets (registers or radiators).
- Eliminate leaks in heating ducts running through unheated spaces by sealing them with duct mastic, and insulate the joints with R6 vinyl-backed insulation wrap.
- Have your heating system checked at least every two years to make sure it is operating efficiently.
- If you have a gas forced-air furnace, clean or replace the filter monthly.
- Close the damper when the fireplace isn't in use, or block the opening with a removable cover.

EVERYDAY HABITS

THERMOSTAT SETTINGS

Set your thermostat no higher than 65° during the day, and 5 to 10° less at night. If you will be away, lower the setting to 60° for a weekend, 55° for a longer period.

- Keep draperies and shades open in sunny windows; close them at night.
- Move furniture, curtains or anything that blocks air circulation from heating outlets and air-return grilles.
- Wear warm clothing – using layers — rather than turning up the heat.

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Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

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