

Low Cost, No Cost Do-It-Yourself Home Audit

Windows & Doors

- ❑ On a windy day, hold a strip of plastic food wrap and move it around the frame of each window. If the plastic wrap flutters, the window needs caulking.
- ❑ Check sash windows for air tightness by opening each, inserting a new dollar bill where the sashes meet, then shut the window. If you can pull out the bill without opening the window, the sashes are not tight.
- ❑ Try to slip a quarter under each outside door. If it goes through easily, the door needs weather stripping.

Heat & Air Conditioning

- ❑ Always make sure your furnace filter is clean. Wash it or replace it once a month according to manufacturer's recommendations to keep your furnace running most efficiently. A clogged filter can make the unit have to work harder, costing you more money.
- ❑ Check your ductwork to make sure it is not separated or leaking air anywhere.
- ❑ Check the air conditioner portion of your heating/cooling system to make sure the air conditioner is not inadvertently in the "ON" position during the winter. This makes the air conditioner come on to cool what the furnace has just heated.
- ❑ Do you have built-in baseboard or other radiant heat that is not used because of other types of heat being used (gas, wood, etc.)? Is it turned off at the circuit breaker? If not, it could still be using electricity. Some thermostats do not turn "OFF," just down.
- ❑ Consider insulating ducts as well as your cold air return to prevent excessive heat loss.

Water Heaters & Pumps

- ❑ Place your hand on it. If it feels warm, you should check your product guide to see if the model you have can support an insulation blanket.
- ❑ When installing the water heater, set it on a piece of Styrofoam insulation to keep heat from dissipating into the floor.
- ❑ Hold an oven thermometer under a faucet with the hot water turned on full force. If it registers more than 140°F and you are not using an automatic dishwasher, you can turn your water heater down to 120°F.
- ❑ Check your electric water heater for burned out elements.
- ❑ Check your submersible pump to see if it is operating continually.

Fireplaces

- While your fireplace is cold, place a thin plastic bag inside. If the bag drifts upward, your damper is not tight. You may need to install a set of air-tight glass doors to further reduce the draw.

Switch Plates & Lights

- To check for air tightness, slowly move plastic wrap in front of the outlet or switch. If the plastic wrap flutters, there is a draft. You can insulate these with inexpensive foam pads available at most hardware stores.
- Have you changed old incandescent light bulbs to energy saving compact fluorescent light bulbs?

Refrigerators & Freezers

- Check your refrigerator and freezer for air tightness by opening the doors, inserting a new dollar bill where the seal meets the unit itself. Shut the door and try to pull the bill out. If you can pull it out, you need a new gasket.
- Does your freezer need to be defrosted?
- Are the coils in the back and underneath clean?
- If you have a self-defrosting appliance, check the overflow pan and the coils underneath frequently.
- Place a thermometer in a glass of cold water, then into the refrigerator. After 10 minutes, check the reading. A refrigerator need not be any cooler than 38°F. Do the same thing with the freezer. It does not need to be any colder than 5°F. In a stand-alone freezer, the temperature should be 0°F.

Other Appliances

- Do you have a waterbed? Leaving it uncovered in an unheated room could be causing it to work all the time. Also, placing it on the floor over an unheated area causes a heat loss underneath.
- Do you have a dehumidifier? Check to see if it is running continuously.
- Are any appliances, pipes or other devices in your home shocking you? If this is the case, we advise contacting a qualified electrician for a thorough inspection.

Electronics

- Are you utilizing power strips to shut off electricity in areas where multiple electronic devices such as TVs, satellites, computers, video equipment, etc. are not in use?