

HOME

The federal home insulation program

By Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Someone once said that everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it. These days everybody talks about energy conservation, but unlike the weather, many people are doing something about it.

Some of the most ambitious programs are those launched by the Federal Government in 1977 which focus on the potential savings to be realized by cutting our national home-heating bill.

Greater use of insulation is

the key element of the government's approach to the problem. It is said that full insulation of a Canadian home can lower the heating cost of the unit by as much as \$140 annually at today's prices.

Government measures already in operation or planned for the immediate future form a two-pronged energy-saving campaign - upgrading the insulation qualities of our existing housing stock and encouraging the adoption of much higher insulation requirements for all new house

construction.

The first government-sponsored program, begun February 1977 in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, has met with overwhelming public response. Both provinces are heavily dependent on imported oil for electric power generation and householders have faced soaring power bills because of increasing costs of foreign oil.

The Home Insulation Program for the two provinces, administered by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, now offers consu-

mers a way of offsetting their mounting electricity cost through fuel savings gained from improved home insulation.

Homeowners, tenants or landlords of buildings of three storeys or less are all eligible for Program grants of up to \$350 for insulation material if they plan to do the work themselves. If they intend to hire a contractor, the grant can cover one third of the cost, up to a maximum of \$500. Assistance is not only available for the insulation of ceilings, above-grade walls,

basement walls and floors. It can cover the cost of multiple glazing of doors and windows caulking, storm doors and even weatherstripping.

In just the first 10 months of the program applications for assistance had been received by CMHC covering some 17,500 F.E.I. homes - more than half of the total number of units in the province which could qualify under the Program. There has also been a flurry of activity in Nova Scotia where applications have already numbered 84,000 out of a potential 242,000 homes.

Canadians in other parts of the country became eligible for federal energy-conservation grants on September 1, 1977 when a seven-year, \$1.4 billion Canadian Home Insulation Program was introduced.

CHIP offers taxable grants of up to \$350 to cover two-thirds of the cost of insulation materials used to upgrade existing homes. Not all existing dwellings are eligible immediately. The government's program is designed to concentrate initial activity on the country's oldest housing stock which generally has the poorest insulation.

As a result, homes built before 1921 in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are now eligible as are those constructed prior to 1941 in Newfoundland, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

A centralized office set up in Montreal to administer CHIP has received over 75,000 enquiries in just the first two months of the program, many of them handled through a bank of telephones receiving collect calls placed through local operators by prospective applicants across Canada. The telephone number is (area code 514) 341-1511.

Whether or not they are eligible for grant assistance under either of the government's home insulating programs, Canadians anywhere can obtain detailed information on ways to cut heating costs from the publication "Keeping the Heat In."

More than a million copies of the book, published by Energy, Mines and Resources Canada with the assistance of CMHC, have already been distributed. It is available free by writing to P.O. Box 3500, Station "C", Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4G1.

Government efforts to promote energy savings in Canadian homes will be strengthened this year when a recently completed "Canadian Code for Energy Conservation in New Buildings," becomes effective. The new standards have been prepared by an independent committee, representing all facets of the building industry, established by the National Research Council.

Housing built to these requirements will need about 30 per cent less energy than those meeting current standards because they call for a much higher "R" value for insulation. That is the measurement of insulation's ability to resist heat transfer and it is usually indicated on packaged insulating materials. A higher "R" value means less heat will be lost through the insulation.

As an example of the new standards, the thickness of commonly used insulation in ceilings would be increased from 4" to 11" or 12" and the insulation in walls would have to be 1 1/2" to 2" thicker than the 4" used at present.

Although this will mean somewhat higher initial cost for insulation the added expense would soon be recovered through reduced fuel bills.

How well is your oil furnace?

Most Canadian homes, especially older ones, are heated by oil furnaces. In Quebec and the Maritimes, residential heating is almost exclusively by oil.

In the conventional oil furnace, heating is accomplished by mixing a spray of oil droplets with air and igniting it to give a flame. To get the most heat, your fuel should be burned completely. The oil-air mixture should use the minimum quantity of air that will give a "clean" flame. Smoke at the tip of the flame will cause soot deposits, and

rob you of heat.

How well is your furnace working? Three ways to find out yourself:

1. The major care of your oil furnace should be left to a qualified serviceman. But there are a few points that you can look after yourself:

Look for a dirty flame. In the front of your furnace you'll find a flap covering a small hole. You can peek in here to see the flames. (Careful! If your furnace has been on for a couple of minutes the flap will be hot.) Black smoke coming from the tip of the flame is a sure sign that your burner needs adjustment. Call a serviceman.

Check for soot. When your furnace is not operating, take a flashlight and have a look inside the box. How much soot has built up? The more soot, the less efficient the furnace - and the more it's costing you to heat your home. If there's a soot build-up arrange for an adjustment and cleaning.

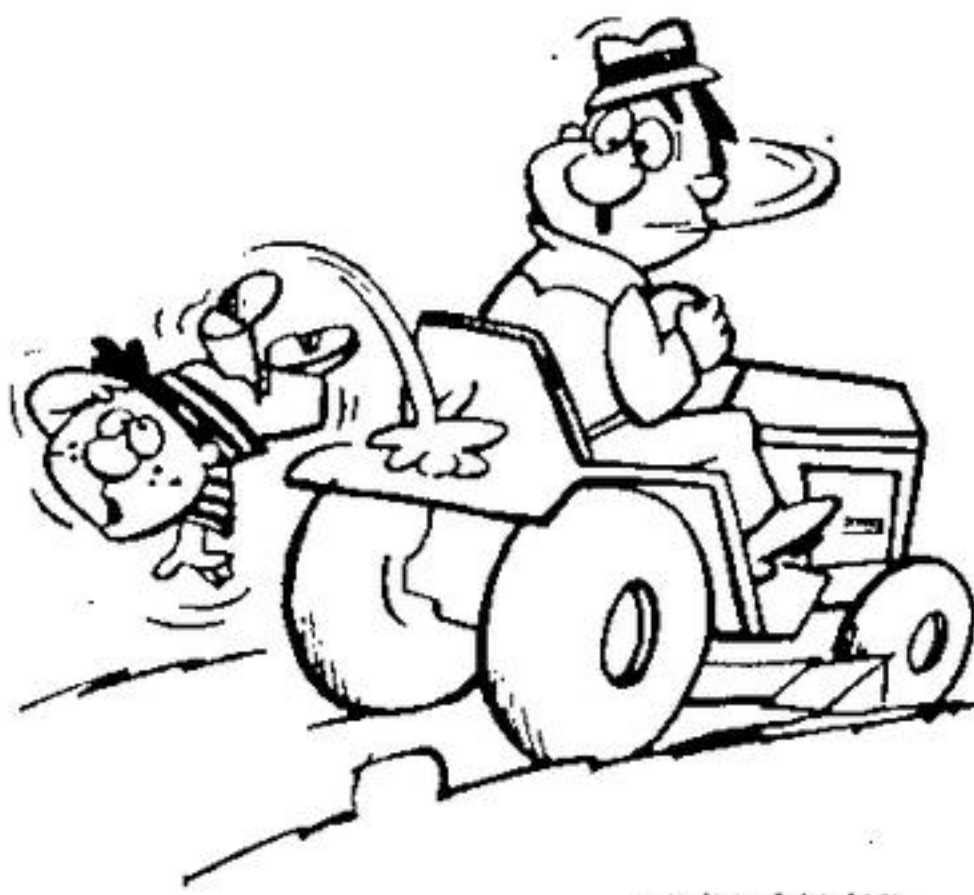
Even with a well-functioning burner there will be some build-up of soot during the winter. This happens when the burner switches on, before the fuel oil is properly mixed with the air. The same thing happens when the burner switches off. You can buy a "clutch coupling" or "solenoid valve" that will help to counteract this. Your serviceman will have the prices and can install either one for you.

Check the barometric damper. You'll see the barometric damper on the pipe leading from furnace to chimney.

This valve bumps open and shut as the wind blows and as the furnace cuts in and out. (Occasionally mistaken for a noisy burglar!) It allows cool air to be drawn from the basement into the chimney acting as a buffer to keep

means you're wasting energy and money. Call your serviceman.

If all Canadians saved this 10 per cent, Canada would save \$90 million and 7.5 per million barrels of oil a year. You can see how every drop we save can sell into big savings for the country.



A free ride is a cheap thrill, until you lose balance and spill!

Prevent home fires with clean up

By LARRY BRASSARD
Fire Information Officer
After a very long and cold winter it is once again time to perform the annual ritual of spring clean-up.

This draws about as much interest as watching Joe Schultz watch his dog. Although the prospect of digging through the winters accumulation of useless junk doesn't appeal to any us, it is a very important fire prevention practice. Fire prevention - for most people it ranks below Joe's dog on a scale of interest.

Fire. Most people are quite apathetic about fire. Yet, it continues to exact an enormous and dreadful toll from society - a toll measured in pain, suffering and death. Although we acknowledge the existence and the dangers of fire, it is rarely personalized, and then only in relation to others. For most people fire is too remote a possibility to evoke an action response.

This apathetic view is inherent in us all and until our attitude towards the very real personal danger presented by fire changes, our fire losses will continue to climb.

You must initiate fire prevention in your own home, now. Draw up a fire escape plan. Install smoke detectors, have your home inspected, teach children the dangers of playing with matches and clean-up accumulated rubbish. Now you have come a long way in making your home a safer place to live. But you must do it, you must take action!

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