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# Home, Lawn and energy

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## Keep your heat (and cash) with an energy advisor

**W**e have all been reading about the Kyoto Protocol and the goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a global scale. Part of the solution also rests with you, the homeowner. Taking easy steps to ensure your home is operating efficiently will significantly reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions from about six tonnes of carbon dioxide a year to two or three.

Brent Cooper, a certified energy advisor and registered home inspector, delivering EnerGuide (tm) for houses, a program developed by Natural Resources Canada to help homeowners save money, suggests homeowners can put the money back into their pocket by consulting an expert when it comes home heating or cooling.

Cooper says he will figure out how much energy your house uses and then calculate how much energy is inadvertently lost. With a sophisticated computer program, he then calculates how much less energy a home could use if some components were upgraded. After all the calculations are done, recommendations are made to improve the energy efficiency of the home. This, he says, will reduce the amount of energy required to run the house and save the homeowner valuable dollars.

Cooper, of Georgetown, says he is always amazed when evaluating homes how much energy is going out the walls, windows, un-insulated attics, unused fireplaces, vents, and wall plugs.

"I have seen leaks collectively add up to a hole as big as 237 square inches or to visualize it, it would look like an 16-inch by 16-inch hole in the wall", he said.

"This is heat or air conditioning you will be paying for going out the door, so to speak."

He says most homes have an average energy rating of 62 and this rating could increase to 73 with the recommended upgrades. The savings could be as much as 40 per cent if the homeowner follows the recommendations.

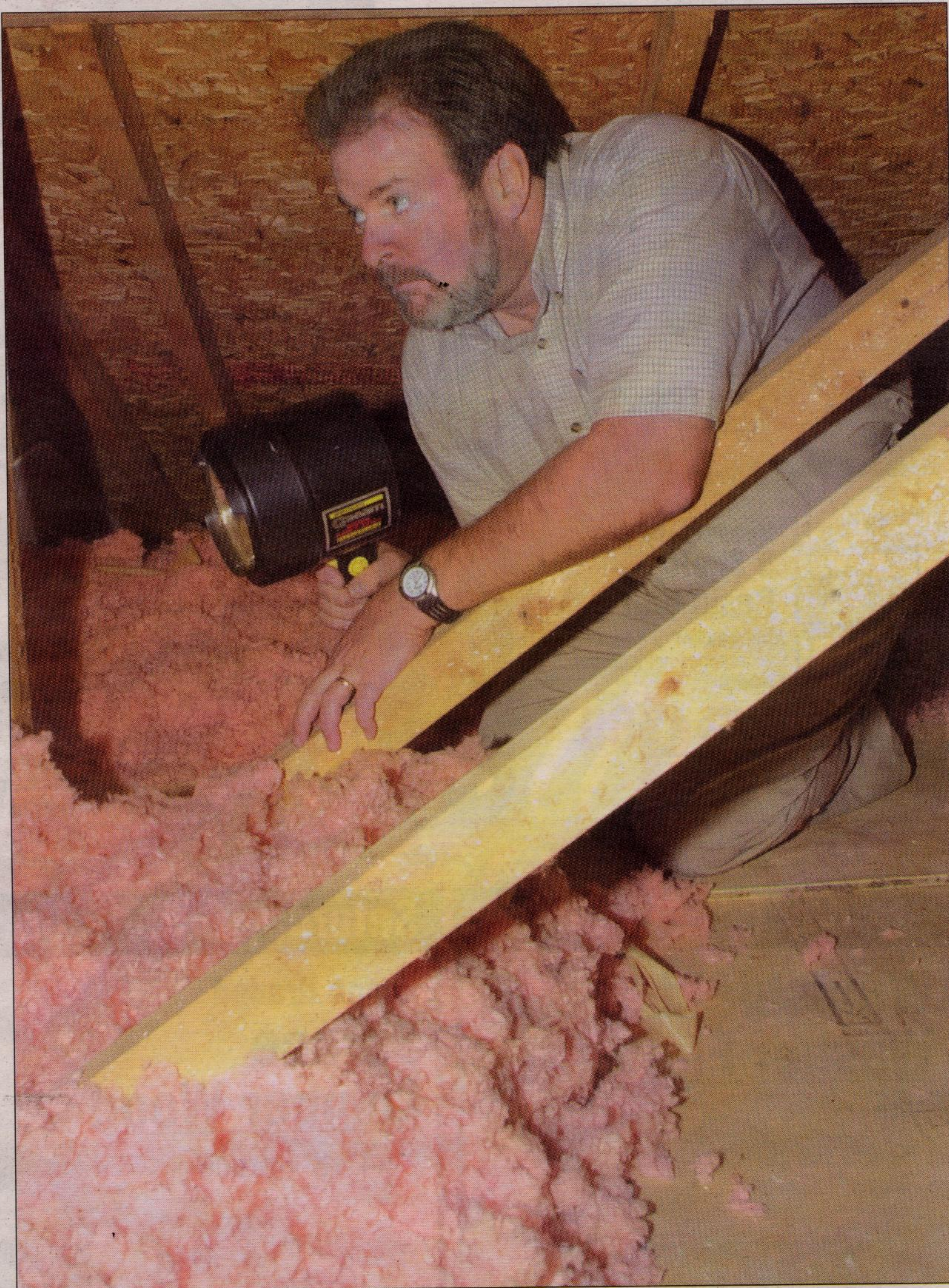
Poor indoor air quality is also an issue for some homeowners due to the lack of proper ventilation. If you notice excessive condensation on walls and windows, mold growth, musty smells or people within the home not feeling well, Cooper says the home's indoor air quality is probably being compromised.

Along with the blower door test, which determines where leaks are occurring, Cooper also checks insulation levels, heating, hot water and ventilation systems. He uses a computer-modeling program to estimate a home's present and potentially-improved energy usage. The homeowner will then receive a report that shows where the energy losses are occurring and recommendations on how to remedy the problems the most affordable way.

This evaluation could save homeowners thousands of dollars, especially when it comes to renovations, purchasing windows or replacing furnaces.

Energy evaluations are also done for new houses about to be built. Cooper says he will take the house plans and work from them making recommendations from the siting of the home on the lot, to the type of windows, doors and insulation to be used. As well, he provides the client with a heat loss calculation to determine furnace size. He will then return to the home after the construction to do a final EnerGuide(tm) inspection, which includes the blower door test.

Cooper covers the Halton, Wellington, Dufferin and Caledon regions. For more information or to book your EnerGuide(tm) evaluation call Brent Cooper at 905-877-7633.



Brent Cooper, a certified energy advisor and registered home inspector delivering EnerGuide (tm) for houses, says homeowners can keep their hard-earned dollars from flying out the door by having their home tested for heat/cooling losses. Photo by Ted Brown



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