

# Keep heat inside the house

**Question: How can I keep the warm air from leaking out of my house?**

**Answer:** Air leakage is the single largest source of heat loss in many Canadian houses.

Air leakage control should therefore be at the top of your list of energy management projects.

The costs involved in air leakage control work can usually be recovered quickly through the savings on your heating bills.

You'll also benefit from increased comfort and peace of mind in the structural integrity of your house. The attic is a good place to start.

Moist air from the living space leaks into the attic through cracks around ceiling light fixtures, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans, chimneys, the plumbing stack and the attic hatchway. Besides wasting energy, this air leakage can result in condensation in the attic.

Working from inside the attic, use caulking to seal cracks where light fixtures and exhaust fans penetrate the attic floor.

You should also insulate fan ducts to prevent condensation from running back inside the ducts. Since the plumbing stack moves up and down, the hole around it must be flexible. Use polyethylene plastic and acoustical sealant to make a loose "boot" of plastic, similar to the boot around the stick shift of a car. The plastic should be sealed tightly to the plumbing stack and the attic floor.

Attic hatches should be weatherstripped like any door, and closed securely.

In the basement, the main air leakage points are where the floor and header joists meet, and where the wooden sill plate rests on the foundation wall. Both these areas can be caulked with latex acrylic or butyl caulking. Polyurethane foam in a spray can with a long nozzle can be used to seal hard-to-reach areas.

To test for air leakage in the living space of your house, run a piece of tissue attached to a wire coat hanger over and around windows, doors and baseboard trim. If the tissue flutters, you have located an air leak.



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