

Do-It-Yourself

Home Energy Survey Checklist



When a home has particular energy-related problems, homeowners (or potential buyers) can begin the diagnostic process. Although it is not a replacement for professional evaluation, the DIY approach can uncover problems for quick fixes or further investigation. Inspect the items on the list and make notes about problems. The list and notes will serve as a to-do list for tackling problem areas and prioritizing repairs and upgrades.



- ❑ Gaps along baseboards, flooring edges, junctures of walls and ceilings, anywhere that two different building materials meet can be sources of energy loss
- ❑ Insulation around electrical outlets and switch plates. Turn off power to an electrical outlet or switch, use a power tester to double-check to ensure that no current is flowing to the outlet, remove the cover plate and probe around the opened outlet with a stick or screwdriver; resistance indicates presence of insulation.
- ❑ Windows and doors—rattling indicates an air leak source
- ❑ Fireplace flue—if you can feel a draft, the fireplace flue may be open, or there may be gaps in the closed position
- ❑ Cellar door and attic hatch—the hatch should have the same amount and type of insulation as the attic floor
- ❑ Hot or cold spots on floors or in rooms—indicates possible insulation issues
- ❑ Drafts through mail slots and pet doors—to reduce energy loss, seal these openings
- ❑ Exhaust fans and hoods, dryer-vents—ensure appropriate airflow in moisture-heavy spaces
- ❑ Foundation seals, siding, mortar between bricks (especially building corners)—these are all areas that require periodic maintenance and are prime sources of air leaks
- ❑ Worn or improperly installed caulking and weather stripping—remove and replace
- ❑ Storm windows installed—creates extra layer of insulation
- ❑ Vapor barrier underneath insulation tightens the seal on the building envelope and improves insulation's performance
- ❑ Attic vents should not be blocked by insulation
- ❑ Wrapping on water heater, hot water pipes, and furnace ducts is good, providing an extra layer of insulation
- ❑ Replacement of furnace air filters—most homeowners don't replace them regularly, but doing so improves indoor air quality and extends the life of your furnace
- ❑ Ducts and seams—dirt streaks indicate leakages that should be sealed
- ❑ Lighting—to improve energy efficiency replace incandescent bulbs with CFL or LED bulbs
- ❑ Schedule annual HVAC inspections to maintain the best performance from your furnace and air conditioner
- ❑ Gaps or settling in wall insulation should be filled, most easily with blown-in insulation

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