

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Home Sealing Saves Money

(NAPSA)—We've all heard the news, heating bills are heading up this winter. One way to reduce costs is to improve your home envelope, a process recommended by the EPA ENERGY STAR® Program called Home Sealing. It means sealing air leaks to stop drafts and adding insulation to stay comfortable.

According to the experts at EPA ENERGY STAR, improving your home's envelope can save you up to 20 percent on your heating bill. Here are a few tips on how to reduce heating bills this winter.

Locating Air Leaks

Air leaks throughout your home can cause uncomfortable drafts and energy losses. Finding these leaks can be tricky. The biggest leaks are usually hidden in the attic and the basement. As air rises up through your home and out through leaks in the attic, outside air is drawn in through basement leaks around windows and doors to replace the lost air. This makes your home feel drafty in winter and results in your heater working harder. By sealing these air leaks, you get the full performance from your insulation and your heating equipment will keep you comfortable on the coldest of days.

Large gaps are often around plumbing pipes, light fixtures, chimneys, soffits and chaseways. Locating leaks can be difficult because they are under your insulation, but it is well worth the effort in terms of cost savings.

The ENERGY STAR Web site



Sealing any air leaks in your home could save you money—and help keep you warm.

(www.energystar.gov) has a downloadable *DIY Guide to Energy Star Home Sealing* in the Sealing section of the site. It's also available at www.dap.com with product recommendations by project. This guide has some great do-it-yourself tips on how to find air leaks, seal up your home's cracks and gaps, and add insulation.

Sealing Air Leaks

Once leaks are found, they are fairly easy to seal with the right products. Any holes ¼ inch or smaller can be sealed with a quality acrylic latex caulk. Latex-based caulk is easy to apply and cleans up with soap and water. DAP's Dynaflex 230®, an elastomeric latex sealant, is perfect for sealing smaller gaps, cracks and holes and comes with a 50-year durability guarantee. Its permanently flexible formula can

accommodate up to 50 percent total joint movement without cracking or losing adhesion, making it the perfect sealant for regions that experience temperature fluctuations.

On larger holes and gaps a foam sealant is needed. Polyurethane foams traditionally have been used for this application, but they are difficult to work with, over expand, and can be nearly impossible to clean up.

But a new foam, DAPtex®Plus™ window & door foam sealant with Co-Vinyl-X9000™, takes the fear out of foam. It is latex-based but has all the sealing and insulating properties of polyurethane foam with none of the application issues. It is toolable, so you can work with it once it is applied; it will not over expand, so you don't have windows or wall sockets popping out because you applied too much of the product and, unlike polyurethane foam, it cleans up with soap and water.

Like standard caulks and sealants, foam sealants can be used in a variety of locations including in the attic and basement. It is not recommended for use around heat sources like chimneys and wood burning stoves. For these applications, use special high temperature silicone caulks.

With just a little effort you can stop one of the major causes of high utility bills. The people at EPA and DAP (www.dap.com) want to keep you warm in winter without draining your pocketbook.