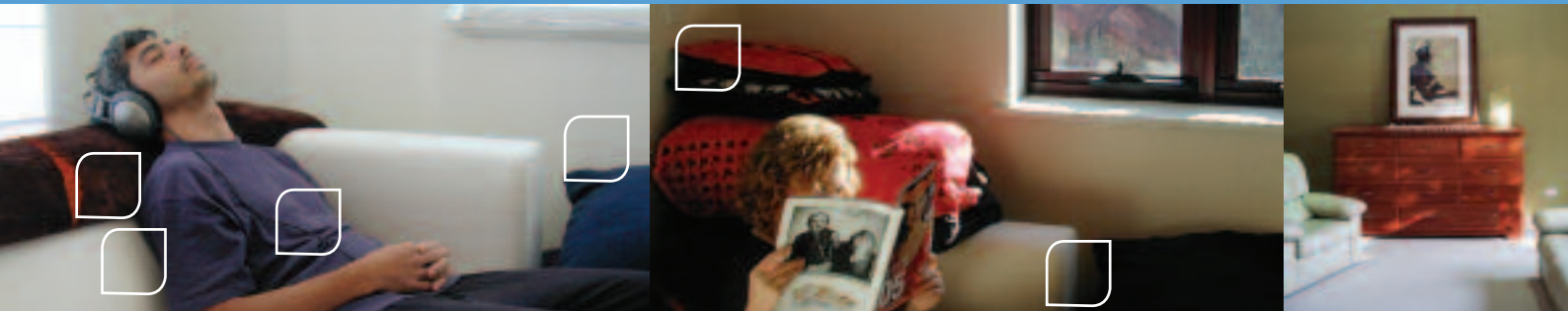


Draught-proofing your home



Whether you have an old or a new home, draughts or air leakage can be a major source of discomfort. In winter, draughts can increase your heating costs by up to 25%.

Draught proofing your home is easy and cost effective.

WHY DRAUGHTS OCCUR

Draughts are caused when hot air rises and is replaced by colder air entering through gaps in the building. While draughts can be costly and uncomfortable, a minimum level of ventilation is needed to maintain a healthy environment.

HOW CAN YOU TELL WHERE A DRAUGHT IS COMING FROM?

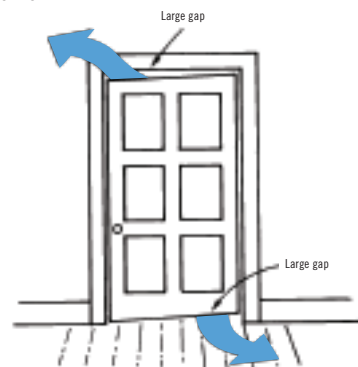
- Look for obvious gaps – visible light under and around doors and windows, or moving curtains.
- Listen for ‘rattles’ or ‘whistling’ around doors and windows, especially during strong winds.
- Feel for moving air around doors, windows, fireplaces, air outlets, vents, stairways, architraves and skirting boards.

DRAUGHT PROOFING DOORS AND WINDOWS

Focus on external doors, windows and doors to ventilated areas such as toilets, bathrooms and laundries. Doors require draught-proofing at their bases and between the door and its frame. Windows should have draught-proofing between the openable sash and the frame.

Products which seal gaps around doors and windows are known as draught excluders, draught strips, draught-seals, weather-seals or weather strips.

Automatic door closers are available for swing and sliding doors and should be fitted to doors leading outside, doors to ventilated areas and doors between heated and unheated zones of your home.



Large gaps around doors and windows may require more substantial attention (carpentry work) to make the gaps smaller



Draught-proofing your home

SEALING GAPS AND CRACKS

Caulking compounds, such as silicone or latex based fillers can be used to seal cracks and gaps. Silicone sealants are weather resistant and should be used in areas exposed to weather. For larger gaps or holes, use an expandable polyurethane filler.

SEALING PERMANENTLY VENTED SKYLIGHTS

If ventilation is not required by building regulations, vents in an existing skylight should be blocked off or a sheet of clear plastic (a diffuser) installed at the base of the skylight shaft.

SEALING FIXED WALL VENTS

Building regulations no longer require these wall vents for living and sleeping areas so use caulking compounds or plaster to seal.

Caution: If you are heating your home with unflued gas heaters, a level of fixed ventilation is required by regulation. It is not advisable to seal wall vents in this case.

CLOSING CEILING OUTLETS

Seal the outlets from ducted cooling systems at ceiling level to prevent heated air escaping in winter. Covers for roof mounted coolers are also available.

Install exhaust fans with automatic shutters or dampers to stop unwanted draughts.

Block off chimneys when not in use.

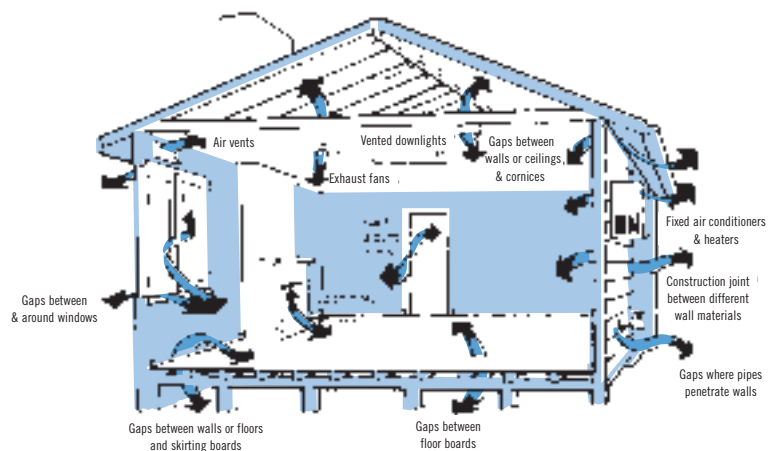
Vented 'down-lights' cannot be safely sealed and should be avoided in heated areas.

DRAUGHT-PROOFING TIPS

The following features can reduce draughts:

- Use vegetation, other buildings and fences as wind breaks.
- Doorways between heated and unheated areas act as air-locks.
- Swing doors instead of sliding doors.
- Avoid louvre windows in heated areas.
- Doorways at the base of stairwells.
- Relatively low ceilings.
- Avoid voids between different floor levels, especially in heated areas.
- External air supply for heaters that burn internal air, (e.g. solid fuel and gas space heaters). Ensure the register can be shut off when not required.

Installing draught excluders or weatherstrips around the home is a fairly easy task for anyone. Most products include all the necessary pieces and have very clear installation instructions. You can find a wide range of draught sealing products at your local hardware store. A current list of manufacturers and some suppliers are listed in the Yellow Pages under 'Weather Seals and Strips' and 'Fireplaces'.



Sources of draughts

FURTHER INFORMATION

Telephone the Energy Smart Information Centre: 1300 138 638

or 02 8281 7777 (callers outside NSW)

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Visit www.energysmart.com.au

The Energy Smart Information Centre is a free advisory service provided by the NSW Government. Energy experts can provide information on a wide range of topics.