

### Air Sealing For Greater Efficiency

When a home has many air leaks, it becomes uncomfortable and costly. Air sealing your home is an easy and cost effective way for you to increase comfort and save money on monthly utility bills.

The Department of Energy estimates 20 percent in energy savings from heating and cooling when a drafty house is air sealed properly. Hidden air leaks cause some of the largest heating and cooling losses; common sites include plumbing penetrations through insulated floors and ceilings, baseboard moldings, dropped ceilings above bathtubs and cabinets, attic access hatches and doors.

Saving money and energy are just two of the benefits from air sealing. Other benefits include noise reduction from outside, fewer ways for pests and insects to enter and an overall increased level of comfort. One way of detecting air leaks is a simple visual inspection. Look and feel for air leaks inside the home. Common areas to look are around doors, window frames, electrical outlets, baseboards, attic hatches, wall/window air conditioners, vents and fans. Other places to look include any plumbing, electrical or gas penetrations that may be entering the home from the attic, crawlspace or outside. If you can

close the door to your home and see light entering between the door frame and the door, it needs to be sealed.

The type of material used to stop air leakage depends on where in the home the leaks are occurring. Foam weather stripping with an adhesive backing can be used to seal around doors. This quick, easy and inexpensive task will help reduce energy costs. Simply remove and clean any old material that is still around the door so the new stripping will stick. Make sure the surface is dry before applying the new weather stripping. Once you have done this, you can apply the new weather stripping around the door.

When outdoors, take a close look at your windows to ensure the caulking is still intact and not cracked, dried or missing. Check to see if the caulking is pliable. If the caulk does not meet these criteria, it is a good idea to replace it. Before caulking the window, clean and remove any old material from the surface. To ensure that you do not seal in moisture, make sure the surface is dry. Once this is done you can seal around the window using a latex waterproof caulk. South River EMC currently offers a rebate for air sealing.



Energy Services Advisor Eric Gainey

For cold air escaping through outlets or light switches on exterior walls, you can purchase foam socket insulators that fit behind your outlet or switch covers and prevent air infiltration. Spray foam is a good insulator to use for gaps and cracks around chimneys and some external penetrations. If you have can lights in your attic, make sure the insulation is around the edges, but not over the unit to prevent heat buildup. Another easy way to prevent air leaks is with door sweeps.

Reducing air leaks in your home is one of the most cost-effective measures you can take to yield big savings. South River EMC has several rebates for taking energy efficiency measures. Visit [sremc.com](http://sremc.com) to learn about all of these incentives and to download an application.

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