ADVISE *Guys*

The hot weather that summer brings is upon us, and there's nothing better than walking into a cool air-conditioned home after being out in the southeastern NC heat. Our air conditioners work overtime during the summer season to keep our homes cool and dehumidified, which always produces an increase in electricity use. Limiting the runtime of your AC unit is the key to lower electric bills this summer. The best ways to cut your summer energy consumption are to maintain the recommended thermostat setting of 78 degrees and to ensure that your home is insulated adequately.

Types of Insulation

There are many insulation types on the market, but the two most common are fiberglass and cellulose. Fiberglass insulation consists of fibers from melted materials like glass, rock, and slag and is usually pink or white in color. These fibers can be installed as loose-fill insulation or they can be bound together in batts using a resin. Cellulose insulation is made from ground-up newspapers or wood waste, treated with fire retardants, and is usually grey in color. This type of insulation is loose and consists of small particles that pack into crevices, which serves to air-seal as well as insulate.

How does insulation work and where should it be found?

Insulation is hugely important when it comes to energy efficiency year round because its primary function is to slow the transfer of heat. Insulation prevents the heat you pump into the home during the winter from rising and escaping out of the attic. In summer, it slows the transmission of heat from the hot unconditioned attic area to the living space. Insulation disrupts the flow of heat by forcing it to pass through millions of microscopic air pockets that exist between the fibers or particles of the insulation material. This is why when insulation gets compacted it loses its effectiveness. Insulation should be found on your attic floor and between the floor joists in your crawl space. There should also be insulation in your walls between the studs, but that area isn't readily accessible in most homes.

How do I know if I have enough?

First, determine what type of insulation you have. If it's in a batt or if it's loose, and pink or white in color, it's probably fiberglass. If it's grey and dense, it's more than likely cellulose. Next, get several measurements in inches at different areas around the floor of the attic, or between the floor joists in the crawl space, using a tape measure. Average out the measurements once you're done. If you have fiberglass insulation in the area you're measuring, multiply the average depth in inches by 2.9. If you have cellulose, multiply the average by 3.4. If you're in the attic and your score is less than 36, you may need to add insulation. If you're in the crawl space and your number is less than 19, you may need more insulation there as well.

Advise Guy Aaron Jackson

If after inspecting your insulation you find that you may need to add more, call one of the Advise Guys at 910.892.8071 or send us an e-mail at adviseguys@sremc.com and we can help you determine best course of action.

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