



CLOSE TO HOME

Fresh Air!

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"At the still point
of the turning world."
T.S. Eliot

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We've rebuilt our
Website! Take a
break and check it
out!

Indoor air quality has become an important issue in recent years. With newer homes being much tighter than those built twenty years ago, fresh air is becoming a rarer commodity.

When doing a Home Energy Audit, one thing considered is the air change per hour (ACH) in the house. A house that has a complete air change every three hours (ACH=.33) is considered tight. An air change every hour (ACH=1) is considered a leaky house. Here are some of the factors that determine a house's ACH:

- 1) Caulking and weatherstripping.
- 2) Windows and doors sealing properly.
- 3) Air leaks to attic.
- 4) Pipe and duct chases sealed to unconditioned areas.
- 5) Leaky ducts
- 6) Fireplace sealing—damper, glass doors.

When a house seal up is called for, the energy technician will use a Blower Door to create a negative pressure inside. This will not only show where the main leakages are occurring, but will give valuable measurements of the ACH before and after the seal up.

Can a house ever be too tight? When considering the six factors just listed, the answer is no. However, a house does need to have proper ventilation or the air quality can degenerate enough to become unhealthy. The recommended ventilation should be equivalent to 15 cubic feet per minute per person, or an ACH of .35, whichever is greater. Indoor air pollutants like combustion heating, tobacco smoke, and high moisture will require even greater ventilation.

So how do we put all of this together: the need for fresh air, proper ventilation; while at the same time being as

energy wise as possible?

Let's take a typical cape cod house that was built in the 1950's: Original wood sash windows, wood storms, thin wood exterior doors, two attic gable vents. What should be done?

This is likely a pretty leaky house. Replacing all of the windows and doors will not make this house "too tight". There are enough leaks around the walls, etc. Changing these out will bring an energy savings, greater comfort from less drafts, and convenience in window and door maintenance. A Home Energy Audit from us will show how quickly energy savings will pay for the upgrades.

However, even before these upgrades are done, the ventilation should be improved. This will not save on energy so much as making a healthier living space.

Fresh air first, comfort second, energy wise third!



THE PEST INSPECTOR'S JOURNAL!

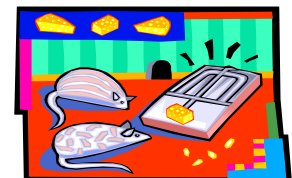
THE ODD - THE SCARY - THE HUMOROUS

Rats in a crawl space. One of my least favorite jobs! It was an old house with three dirt floor crawl spaces with many openings to the outside. Rats could be heard in the apartment walls above. In fact, they had chewed a hole through plaster in a first floor

closet, and were heading for the dog food six feet away.

First order of business was to seal the holes. Then we set the traps. Then we placed the bait stations. Six weeks and six or so dead rats later, we shook hands and called

the job complete. Someone's got to do it!



Bed Bugs

Moving In!

*Frequent Travel? Stay in Hotels?
Children in dorms? Bad Luck?*

Bed Bug extermination: The bald truth

- 1) The going price for exterminating Bed Bugs in 1 hotel room: \$600
- 2) No guarantees
- 3) Be prepared for follow up visits
- 4) Cost for one Bed Bug proof mattress zip cover: about \$100



Check first!



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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE!

Q: We purchased a new oil fired boiler two years ago. Do these need an annual cleaning, considering they are more efficient than the old ones?

A: The short answer is yes. I was recently at a house where the annual cleaning was let go on a new boiler. On one of those zero degree mornings, there was no heat!

New boilers are more efficient than their predecessors. The result is a lower temperature exhaust gas going up the chimney. However, that lower temperature will cause condensation in the flue that can loosen old debris, dropping and clogging a chimney.

If you've ever looked inside an oil burner, whether for a forced air system or a boiler, you would be amazed at the soot buildup over the course of a year. Annual service will clean this, replace the nozzle, tune-up the unit, and clean

any debris in the flue and bottom of chimney. This is really a "must do" maintenance to avoid a no heat situation in the middle of winter.



Q: What are the different factors that cause ice damming?



A: Ice buildup on a roof is a result of heat loss through the roof that refreezes on a cold surface, usually the gutters and eaves. The obvious cause of this is inadequate insulation in the attic spaces. But if ventilation is not up to par,



ASK JOHN!

this too can cause the buildup of heat on the underside of roof sheathing that melts snow. Upgrading both of these attic components will help.

The angle of the sun is also a factor in snow melt. If the roof faces the south or east, winter sun will melt snow, even on the roof of an unheated garage!

Assuming insulation and

ventilation are up to standards, sometimes heat coils are the only option to limit ice buildup. I recommend these be installed by a qualified electrician, onto a GFCI protected circuit. These have been known to cause fires when installed improperly.

Q: What is it with all the Lady Bugs this year?

A: Asian Lady Bugs were introduced into the U.S. in the early 1900's to protect crops in the south from insect damage. They started becoming a general pest problem in the 1980's. Populations have boomed without natural predation present in Asia.



Cats, a natural predator for most household insects, hate them due to an offensive secretion when stressed....