

Getting Your Ducts in a Row

In houses with forced-air heating and cooling systems, ducts are used to distribute conditioned air throughout the house.

In a typical house, about 20 percent of the air that moves through the duct system is lost due to leaks, holes and poorly connected ducts. The result is higher utility bills and difficulty keeping the house comfortable, no matter how the thermostat is set.

Properly sized, installed and sealed ductwork will make your heating and cooling systems significantly more efficient, lower your utility bill and improve your family's comfort.

Duct leaks can pull outside air directly into the ductwork, forcing your system to run longer. Dust and dirt also can be drawn into the ductwork, which builds up on filters and air conditioning coils, making your system work harder and wear out faster.

Sealing leaky ductwork can add years of life to your heating and cooling system.

Energy loss is not the only concern. Leaks in your duct system can pull pollutants and irritants directly into your home.

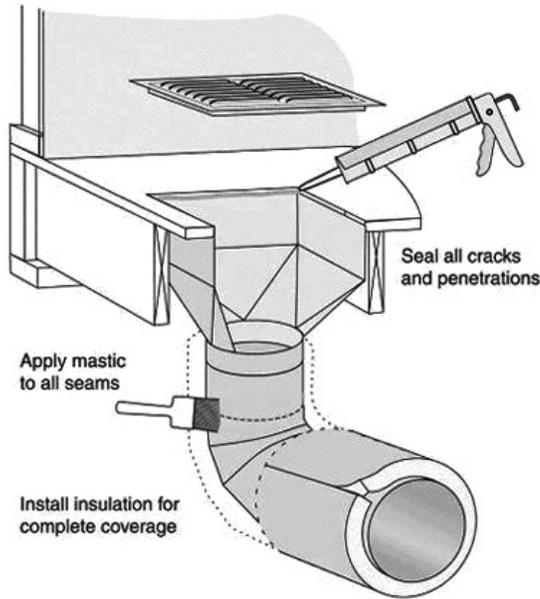
Pollutants are drawn into the ductwork from the attic, crawl space or garage, and are carried by the air conditioner, furnace



Unsealed ductwork



Sealed ductwork



or heat pump fan.

Common pollutants and irritants include pollen and dust, insulation fibers, automobile exhaust, mold and mildew spores, insecticides, rodents and their waste.

During normal operation, gas appliances such as water heaters, clothes dryers, and furnaces release combustion gases, such as carbon monoxide, through the ventilation systems.

Leaky ductwork may cause "backdrafting," when gases draw back into the living space, rather than being expelled outdoors. Sealing minimizes the risk.

The most reliable and cost-effective way to find out the condition of your ducts is to have them tested by



Before cleaning



After cleaning

a Performance Tested Comfort Systems technician. This certified technician will test the amount of airflow that is lost through the duct system when it is at normal operating pressure.

If the test indicates unacceptable leakage, the duct system should be sealed, repaired or renovated.

Typical ductwork repair includes permanently sealing holes, cracks and gaps with specially designed mastic and caulks. Repairs sometimes involve reconnecting ductwork that has

become disconnected or sealing building cavities that are part of your duct system.

If your ductwork runs through attics, crawl spaces and garages, it should be insulated. Your technician can provide an estimate.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Do you have high summer and winter utility bills?
- Do you have rooms that are difficult to heat and cool?
- Do you have stuffy rooms that never seem to feel comfortable?
- Are your ducts located in an attic, crawl space or garage?
- Do you find tangled or kinked flexible ducts in your system?

If you answered yes to even one of the questions, you may want to get your ducts tested.

Call Klickitat PUD's Energy Services Department at (509) 773-7622 or (800) 548-8357 ext. 622 to see if you qualify for a \$300 rebate to test and seal your existing ductwork, and for a list of BPA-qualified technicians. ■

Klickitat PUD will celebrate **Public Power Week**, October 7 to 13, by inviting our customers to join us at our October 12 Open House at the Goldendale and White Salmon offices. Stop by for free refreshments and logo items. Read more about it in the October Ruralite. ■

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