



A do-it-yourself home audit may reveal a few easily corrected issues. One way to increase energy savings is to ensure window frames are leak-free.

Perform a Home Energy Audit

It's easy to find ways to increase your home's energy efficiency and comfort

A simple but diligent walk-through of your home can help you determine how efficient your home is and what upgrades are needed to improve its energy performance.

When assessing your home, keep a checklist of areas you have inspected to help you prioritize your energy-efficiency upgrades.

Air Leaks

The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home ranges from 5 percent to 30 percent per year.

Check for indoor air leaks, such as gaps along the baseboard or edge of the flooring and at junctures of the walls and ceiling. Make a list of the leaks you find.

Check to see if air can flow through these places:

- Electrical outlets
- Switch plates

- Window frames
- Baseboards
- Weatherstripping around doors
- Fireplace dampers
- Attic hatches
- Wall- or window-mounted air conditioners

Also look for gaps around pipes and wires, electrical outlets, foundation seals and mail slots. See if the caulking and weather stripping are in good condition and applied properly, leaving no gaps or cracks.

Plug and caulk holes or penetrations for faucets, pipes, electrical outlets and wiring. Look for cracks and holes in the mortar, foundation and siding, and seal them with the appropriate material.

Inspect windows and doors for air leaks. Try to rattle the windows. Movement means possible air leaks. If you can see daylight

around a door or window frame, there is a leak. You usually can seal these leaks by caulking or weather-stripping them or by covering the windows with low-cost plastic sheets.

Check the storm windows to make sure they fit and are not broken. Check the exterior caulking around doors and windows, and see if exterior storm doors and primary doors seal tightly.

Consider replacing your old windows and doors with newer, high-performance ones. Klickitat PUD has rebates for installing new energy-efficient windows and patio/French doors.

Insulation

Heat loss through the ceiling and walls in your home can be significant if the insulation levels are less than the recommended R-38 minimum.

Check your attic hatch to see if it is at least as heavily insulated as the attic, is weather stripped and it closes tightly. In the attic, make sure to seal any gaps around pipes, ductwork and chimneys. Seal any gaps with an expanding foam caulk or another permanent sealant. Make sure attic vents are not blocked by insulation.

Seal any electrical boxes in the ceiling with flexible caulk (from the living room side or attic side) and cover the entire attic floor with at least the current recommended amount of insulation.

Any heat-producing items such as can lighting and fans should be baffled at a minimum of 3 inches so you can insulate up to the barrier, unless the can lights are insulated ceiling-rated.

It can be difficult to determine the amount of insulation in your wall. Make a small hole in an exterior wall behind a couch, or in some other unobtrusive place to see what, if anything, the wall cavity is filled with.

The wall cavity should be completely filled with some form of insulation material. Unfortunately, this method cannot tell you if the entire wall is insulated, or if the insulation has settled. You need a thermographic inspection to determine this.

If your basement is unheated, determine if there is insulation under the living-area flooring. The amount of insulation

should be the entire depth of the joists and should be supported adequately.

Klickitat PUD offers rebates for installing insulation. These rebates are determined by square footage, and vary depending on the type of home and current insulation levels.

Heating/Cooling Equipment

Inspect heating and cooling equipment annually, or as often as recommended by the manufacturer. If you have a forced-air furnace, check your filters and replace them as needed, which is generally about once every month.

Have a professional check and clean your equipment every year.

If the unit is more than 15 years old, consider replacing your system with a newer energy-efficient unit. A new unit can greatly reduce your energy consumption.

Check your ductwork for dirt streaks, especially near seams, which indicate air leaks. Leaks should be sealed with a duct mastic by a Performance Tested Comfort System's technician. Insulate any ducts or pipes that travel through unheated spaces with a recommended R-value of 6.

Klickitat PUD offers rebates on air-source, ground/water source and ductless heat pumps, as well as duct sealing.

Lighting

Energy for lighting accounts for about 10 percent of your electric bill. Examine the wattage size of the light bulbs in your house because you may have 100-watt—or larger—bulbs where 60 or 75 watts would suffice.

Also consider replacing your incandescent and compact fluorescent lighting with LED bulbs for a more efficient and safer way to light your home.

Klickitat PUD offers recycling for compact fluorescent lamps.

Contact Klickitat PUD's Energy Services for more information and to see if your home qualifies for energy efficient rebates at 800-548-8357, ext. 622 or 509-773-7622. ■

Klickitat PUD Freelance Writer/Photographer Wanted

Have you read an interesting article in Klickitat PUD's edition of Ruralite magazine and thought you had what it takes to write a fun, compelling or emotional feature? If so, KPUD is looking for a local freelance journalist interested in finding and producing features in and around our service territory.

If you or someone you know has writing experience—professional or enthusiast—and wants to be a part of your utility's editorial effort, email writing and photography samples, along with a brief introduction, to Ruralite Assistant Editor Brandon Pomrenke at brandonp@ruralite.org. Be sure to include what excites you about writing in your community!

