

# Home Buyer's Energy Efficiency Checklist

- Have any energy efficiency improvements been made?
- Windows
  - Doors
  - Appliances \_\_\_\_\_
  - Heating/Air Conditioning
  - Water System
  - Insulation
  - Duct Sealing
- Has there been an energy inspection/audit/check-up or assessment?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, who performed the audit and was a written report or a score given?  
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## UTILITY BILLS:

- Ask the seller for the utility bills of the past 12 months.  
*If the seller does not have this information, ask them to check with their utility company for a report.*

## HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS:

- Have the heating and air conditioning system(s) been replaced?
- Does the heating system have an ENERGY STAR<sup>®</sup> label?  
*This means that the system exceeds Government energy standards.*
- Look for the EnergyGuide label on the heating system. If it's missing find the brand and model number on the furnace, then check with the dealer or manufacturer for A.F.U.E. rating.
- Is there a programmable thermostat that controls the heating and air conditioning?

## INSULATION:

- Does the homeowner know if there are proper amounts of insulation in the ceiling and attic?
- Is the attic access insulated and weatherized/sealed?
- Is the insulation in the attic evenly installed with no holes or gaps except around vents and some recessed light fixtures?
- Are the outlets, fixtures, and switch plates properly insulated so that you cannot feel air movement when you put a hand in front of them?

## WINDOWS AND DOORS:

- Are the window and doorframes caulked on the inside and weather-stripped? Run your hand around them to see if they are sealed tightly. Can you feel any air coming in? Is there excessive moisture or condensation visible on the glass?
- Are the windows ENERGY STAR<sup>®</sup>? Do the sellers have manufacturer's information about the windows?*
- Are the windows made of double pane glass? *Double pane insulating glass should be used throughout the house.*
- If not, are the window frames of good quality? *Window frames and their quality construction and installation are as important as the insulating value of the glass. Wood, vinyl, composite, and fiberglass frames offer the best insulating value today.*
- Is the entrance door protected from the cold outside air by a storm door or a vestibule?
- Are the exterior doors insulated and weather-stripped?
- Is the weather-stripping in place so that it stops air filtration into the house? *Place your hand around the door; you may be able to feel the air coming into the house.*

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

## AIR LEAKAGE:

- If there is a fireplace, does the fireplace damper fit tightly so that you cannot see light or a gap around the closed damper? *A great deal of heating and cooling can be lost up the chimney if the damper is not tightly sealed.*
- Do kitchen, bath, and laundry exhaust fans have positive-closure dampers?

## APPLIANCES:

- Look for the ENERGY STAR® label or an Energy Guide label that indicates energy efficiency or consumption on each kitchen appliance.

## SHADING & SCREENING:

- Is there landscaping around the home that can block the high summer sun and the winter winds?
- Are there roof overhangs that help shade the wall and windows?

## WATER SYSTEM:

- Is the water heater energy efficient? Look for the Energy Guide label to learn the energy consumption. You can also check efficiency by noting the fuel type, brand, and model. Look for the ENERGY STAR® label which ensures energy efficiency.
- Are the hot water pipes wrapped with insulation? Is the hot water heater wrapped with an insulating blanket? *Note: Newer models of hot water heaters do not require an insulation blanket.*
- Are the showerheads low-flow to save on hot water? *Flow restrictors can cut the flow of water by 40-60 percent.*
- Are the faucets free of leaks? Do the faucets have aerators? *Aerators will lower the gallons per minute used by close to 50 percent without sacrificing pressure.*

## LIGHTING:

- Are there any CFLs in the house? *If there are no CFLs, start by replacing your five most frequently used incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs once you move in. (Go to [www.energystar.gov/cfls](http://www.energystar.gov/cfls) to download the "CFL Purchasing Guide.")*

## ASK YOUR HOME INSPECTOR:

- Check insulation and confirm R-value.
- Is the rim joist insulated where the floor joists end at the top of the basement wall?
- Are the sill plates insulated, sealed, or caulked to reduce infiltration?
- Are the heating ducts and hot water pipes that pass through unheated areas sealed and insulated and pipes that pass through heated areas sealed? *Energy loss from the duct system can be as much as 15 to 25 percent of the heating and cooling bill.*
- Are all heating elements operating properly? *After the thermostat is turned up 5 degrees, hot water and steam radiators should provide heat within 15 minutes and all forced or gravity hot-air registers should provide heat in 5 minutes.*
- Are there outside combustion air intakes for furnaces and fireplaces?
- Is the attic ventilated using soffit or roof vents?

## FINANCIAL:

If the home is energy efficient, you may qualify for an "Energy Efficient Mortgage" (EEM) or special financial incentives. If you choose to make energy efficient improvements (EIM) you may be eligible for special financing options and tax incentives. Ask your real estate agent and/or lender about them. Additional information on financing energy improvements is available in the Booklet, *What Is Your Home Energy Rating?* at: [www.energy.ca.gov/HERS/booklet.html](http://www.energy.ca.gov/HERS/booklet.html).

To learn more about energy resources and how to use them wisely in your home, incentives and rebates, and other consumer tips and videos, visit the Consumer Energy Center at: [www.consumerenergycenter.org](http://www.consumerenergycenter.org).

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