What to Expect During your Energy Audit

Length: Typically 3-4 hours

Common Elements of an Energy Audit:

Your contractor will base their recommendations on a combination of diagnostic testing, visual inspection, and their own professional experience. Weatherization contractors are able to provide good recommendations even if they are unable to complete a blower door test or use infrared imaging during the home energy audit.

1. **Combustion testing** checks whether your heating system and other combustion appliances are adequately vented for your safety.
2. A **blower door test** de-pressurizes your home to measure/identify air leakage.
   a. Will **NOT be completed** if depressurization would disturb potentially hazardous material (e.g. vermiculite, mold), or create back-drafting in a warm woodstove.
3. **Inspection of all accessible insulation** (e.g. attic, basement, knee walls, etc.)
4. **Infrared camera** (used sometimes, but not always, to further assess air leakage and insulation levels)
   a. Thermal imaging works best when there is a significant temperature difference between indoors and outdoors.
5. **Energy audit report** (completed and sent to you after the audit; contains detailed recommendations)

Pre-Audit Checklist for Homeowners:

- Plan to be present and follow your contractor around during the audit. This can be as valuable as reading the written energy audit report.
- Call your contractor the day before your audit to confirm your date/time.
- Ensure there is a clear path to access your attic and any knee walls or crawl spaces.
- Do not light a fire in your woodstove on the day of your energy audit – your stove must be completely cold, with no embers whatsoever, in order to safely complete a blower door test.
- Make sure your furnace is operational (can be turned on; is not awaiting repairs) – this is necessary for the combustion testing portion of your audit.
- Prepare a summary of the following (written and/or verbal), even if your contractor doesn’t ask for it:
  - How much fuel do you use each year?
  - Is your thermostat programmed? What temperatures do set your thermostat to?
  - Where in your house do you notice cold floors, condensation, drafts?
  - Where do ice dams and/or icicles occur?
  - Have you noticed any snow melt patterns on your roof? Spots that melt sooner than others?
  - What are your weatherization priorities? Cost savings? Comfort? Reduced ice dams?
  - Are you planning any other home renovations in the next year or so?
  - Does your home have vermiculite, radon issues, knob and tube wiring, or mold?
- Prepare a list of any specific questions you have for your contractor.

After Your Audit:

- Ask when you can expect to receive an audit report. Contact your contractor if you have not received a report by the promised day.
- You are under no obligation to move forward with any of your contractor’s recommendations.

This guide was created by Vital Communities in November 2019. Contact energy@vitalcommunities.org with questions.