

# Professional Home Energy Assessments

Sustainability series  
Home energy audits

Professional energy assessments generally go into great detail. The energy auditor should do a room-by-room examination of the residence, as well as a thorough examination of past utility bills. Many professional energy assessments will include a blower door test. Most will also include a thermographic scan

## Preparing for an Energy Assessment

Before the energy auditor visits your house, make a list of any existing problems such as condensation and uncomfortable or drafty rooms. Have copies or a summary of the home's yearly energy bills. (Your utility can get these for you.) Auditors use this information to establish what to look for during the audit. The auditor first examines the outside of the home to determine the size of the house and its features (i.e., wall area, number and size of windows). The auditor then will analyze the residents' behavior:

- Is anyone home during working hours?
- What is the average thermostat setting for summer and winter?
- How many people live here?
- Is every room in use?

Your answers may help uncover some simple ways to reduce your household's energy consumption. Walk through your home with the auditors as they work, and ask questions. They may use equipment to detect sources of energy loss, such as blower doors, infrared cameras, furnace efficiency meters, and surface thermometers.

## Selecting an Energy Auditor

There are several places where you can locate professional energy assessment or auditing services. Your state or local government energy or weatherization office may help you identify a local company or organization that performs audits. They may also have information on how to do your own assessment. Your electric or gas utility may conduct residential energy assessments or recommend local auditors. Also check your telephone directory under headings beginning with the word "Energy" for companies that perform residential energy assessments. See the Learn More section on the right side of the page (or below if you've printed it out) for more auditor resources.

Before contracting with an energy auditing company, you should take the following steps:

- Get several references, and contact them all. Ask if they were satisfied with the work.
- Call the Better Business Bureau and ask about any complaints against the company.
- Make sure the energy auditor uses a calibrated blower door.
- Make sure they do thermographic inspections or contract another company to conduct one.