

Air Tight is Too Tight!

Just like you need oxygen to operate properly, so do fuel burning appliances in your home. When they do not get the oxygen they need to completely burn fuel such as wood, natural gas, propane or kerosene, carbon monoxide is produced. Carbon monoxide is a tasteless, colourless and odourless poisonous gas often referred to as "the silent killer". Make sure your home always has an adequate air supply... for you and your fuel burning appliances.

If your home is tightly sealed to make it energy efficient, consider investing in an air exchange system. Professionally installed, they exchange the air inside the house, usually every 24 hours, with a fresh supply without wasting heat.

When renovating or building, consider installing heating systems and appliances such as fireplaces that have a direct feed of outside air for combustion so they do not draw air from inside the home. The combustion chambers are sealed so they are safe and more energy efficient.

Be mindful that the air you exhaust from your home has to be replaced. Powerful exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens or open hearth wood burning fireplaces can quickly vent large amounts of air. Some can actually create a negative pressure inside your home resulting in a back draft which will draw exhaust fumes back into the house.

What is the simplest way to ensure there is enough fresh air to go around? Open a window!

Signs your Home is Gasping for Air

For a house to be healthy, it needs to "breathe". It needs to expel moisture and other gases from inside and take in a constant supply of fresh air from outside.

How can you tell if your home is too air tight?

- Generally the air inside your home is stuffy and stale.
- Excessive condensation dripping down your windows. (This could also mean your humidifier is set too high so check that first.)
- The pilot light on your gas appliance keeps going out.
- A gas flame burns yellow instead of blue (except in the case of a natural gas fireplace).
- The smell of exhaust gases is present in your home. Although you cannot smell carbon monoxide, other exhaust gases do have an odour.

If you see these signs, contact a certified heating contractor or a building ventilation expert to check your home and correct the problem.