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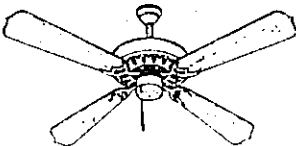
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## A too-airtight home requires ventilation

In the days before airtight homes, ventilation was accomplished largely through cracks and leaks in the home itself. Of course, the home was likely to be a bit drafty in the winter and rather warm in the summer.

Now, with ever-increasing heating and cooling costs, homeowners across the country are tightening up their homes. Plugging leaks and adding storm windows and doors, along with increasing insulation, saves money and keeps homes cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

But a too-tight home can cause problems. Problems like musty smells, stained ceilings, crumbling plaster and peeling paint can be traced to a lack of proper ventilation.

What can a homeowner do to maintain an energy-efficient home and avoid these problems?

Experts at Manville, a fiber-glass insulation manufacturer, say the answers are simple.

**THE PROBLEMS** may arise when more water vapor is produced in the home than is dispersed to the outside through ventilation. Water vapor in the home develops from a variety of everyday activities such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and bathing.

If this water vapor is allowed to collect in the attic or walls, it can soak into the insulation, thereby decreasing its effectiveness.

Water vapor can also soak into the internal structure of the home. Once the insulation dries, it regains its insulative qualities, but other parts of the home may not dry out as easily.

The way to avoid these problems is to prevent too much water vapor from collecting and to provide a way for it to escape to the outside air. (Some extremely airtight homes may need a heat-recovering air exchanger.)

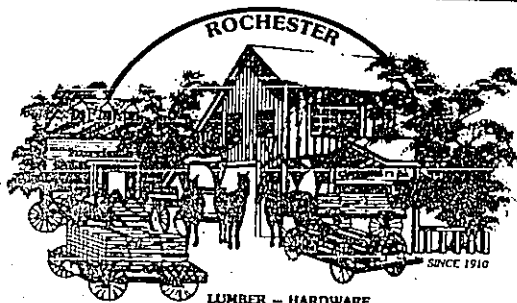
Important areas to consider are (1) sufficient ventilation and (2) vapor barriers, if needed. (Vapor barriers are materials which retard the movement of water vapor.)

Home-energy experts agree that adding fiber-glass insulation to your attic is probably the easiest and most cost-effective way to lower heating and cooling bills, so let's look at how ventilation and vapor barriers should be used in the well-insulated attic.

**CONSIDER ATTIC** ventilation first. Proper ventilation lessens heat build-up in the summer and lets moisture escape in summer and winter. At least two vent openings, located so air can flow in one and out the other, should be provided.

As a basic guide, the recommended minimum amount of attic vent area your home should have is one-square-foot inlet

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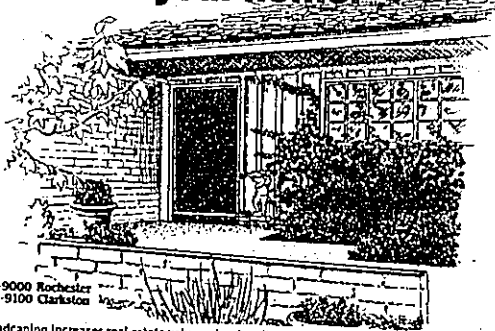
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