

Consider doing small fix-up jobs yourself

Susan Tauber-Hyke
Special writer

ONCE ARMED with ideas as to what to do to make your home more energy efficient, your next step is deciding which jobs to do and who is going to do them.

It's a good idea to call a professional to do the major jobs, such as window or hot water tank replacement. The smaller jobs, such as caulking, are easy ones to do yourself.

John Cyrowski, merchandiser for Farmington Hills-based ACO Hardware, recommends the 3M products for

covering windows, triple-expanding and minimal-expanding caulk, silicone caulk and kits that seal around garage doors.

"Covering windows is still very popular. 3M puts out the best product because of its tape, which is guaranteed to hold and to come off easily, whether you use the kits for inside or outside the house," Cyrowski said.

One area people sometimes forget to insulate is their garage. ACO has kits that seal around and under garage doors. "A lot of energy is lost on the bottom, sides and tops of garage doors,"

Cyrowski said. "It's important to seal this energy in, especially when the garage is attached to the house."

As for foam insulation, which he says is excellent, Cyrowski recommends Great Stuff and Foam Plus. Great Stuff expands a minimal amount. Foam Plus is good for filling large holes because it expands a great deal.

Cyrowski suggests spending extra money to buy silicone caulks instead of the cheaper latex caulks. Silicone caulks stay flexible, even in cold weather, and last for as long as 25 years.

HOMEFACTS

Simple ways to save money on household energy costs

- Set freezer at five degrees (zero for long-term storage).
- Set refrigerator at 38 to 40 degrees. Save up to \$50 a year.
- Air-dry dishes in dishwasher. Save up to \$30 a year.

Source: Better Homes and Gardens Remodeling Ideas magazine

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HOMEFACTS

Save wood ashes from the fireplace or wood stove this winter.

Wood ash, especially from hardwood logs, makes a good addition to compost.

Source: Year-Round House Care, Consumer Report Books

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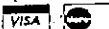


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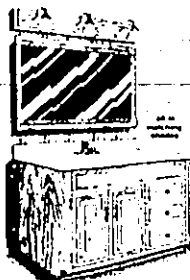
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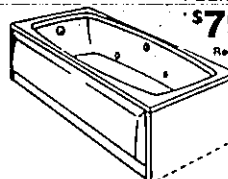
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