

Ceiling insulation foils fuel shortage

A do-it-yourself approach to laying insulation in the ceiling of your home can bring comfort and financial savings.

The job is not difficult. It requires some basic measurements to determine how much insulation is necessary, materials to secure the insulation in place and a couple of hours to do the work.

If the homeowner chooses not to install the insulation himself, qualified insulation contractors can be called upon to do the project.

Before undertaking this task, the homeowner should first decide how much insulation is needed and what type best suits his needs.

Insulation should be purchased on the basis of its R-factor, an industry assigned rating that measures the product's resistance in

keeping warm air in a home and cold air out. Consumers Power Company recommends ceiling insulation that would give the ceiling at least a Federal Housing Administration approved R-19 rating.

R-numbers are clearly marked on the insulation package. Don't choose blanket and batt insulation by thickness—it is the R-number that tells you how much you need and how well the insulation will perform.

To determine the amount of insulation needed to achieve the proper R-rating, simply divide that rating by the rating on the insulation product. If you want the desired R-rating of 19 and your choice of insulating material has an R-value of 3.79 per inch, you would need six inches of insulation to do an ideal job.

home & garden

Insulation is available in three forms. Blanket insulation comes in long rolls of various widths and thicknesses. If your attic has long rows of interrupted spaces between joists, this kind of insulation may be fireproof. Insulating batts are normally made of the same material as blanket insulation, only cut into shorter lengths, usually four and eight feet. Batts are well suited for attics with cross-beaming or other obstructions that prevent long, uninterrupted rows.

Loose-fill insulation is in fiber or pellet form and can be easily poured from bags. Before you undertake your insulation project, these safety rules should be observed:

- Locate all electrical wiring in the attic and avoid unnecessary contact with it.
- Don't smoke while installing insulation. The insulation may be fireproof, but your attic probably isn't.
- Watch your step in an attic. If the construction is unfinished, the sharp ends of roofing nails are sticking out the inside surfaces of the attic roof. Also, install some sturdy planking on which to move about.
- Some insulation materials can irritate your skin, so you may want to wear protective rubber gloves.
- Install a light to illuminate your work area.

Your first step in insulating is to measure the attic and determine how much product you will need. Find the gross area of your attic floor by multiplying the length by the width. Then measure the joist spacing (this distance will be either 16 inches or 24 inches). If the distance is 16 inches, multiply your gross area by .90.

If the distance is 24 inches, multiply your gross area by .84.

Example: 1,200 feet of gross attic area with the joists spaced at 16 inches would require 1,080 square feet of blankets or batts (1,200 X .90 equal 1,080).

If you decide on loose-fill insulation, you'll find imprinted on the bag the number of square feet which can be covered at a given depth to attain a known "R" value. Make sure the depth remains constant. Otherwise you will cheat yourself on the total "R" value you want to reach.

The building supply center has delivered the insulation to your home and you are ready to begin.

Make sure there are no leaks in the roof by checking for water marks or stains in the attic. Water coming through the shingles will damage a good ceiling insulation job.

For loose-fill insulation, the water vapor barrier you install should be a polyethylene plastic sheet, at least two

mils thick, which is laid down over the joists and ceiling before you pour any insulation.

For blankets and batts, the vapor barrier is usually attached to the insulating product.

The blanket rolls of insulation come tightly compacted from the factory. Don't unroll them until you start the job. Start at one end of the attic and unroll the blanket insulation into place in the space between the joists. Make sure the treated, vapor-barrier surface of each roll is in contact with the ceiling.

Be careful not to cover any air vents with insulation. Most vent openings are positioned so that air can flow in through one vent, over the insulation and out through the other vent.

Proper ventilation is an important part of the total insulation installation. It is recommended that you have a minimum of two square feet of inlet and two square feet of outlet for every 600 square feet of ceiling area.

3-month-old land sales act amended

Gov. William G. Milliken has signed into law Land Sales Act amendments aimed at clamping down on out-of-state developers on one hand, and easing up on small Michigan developers on the other.

The amendments to the three-month-old Land Sales Act are contained in HB-505 (L.E.) and are intended to make the new law more realistic in its application.

The major change was the repeal of Section 33, intended originally by the Legislature as a "grandfather clause" exempting from registration with the state those persons previously licensed as real estate agents.

Courts' opinion, however, determined that the language

of control under the Subdivision Control Act.

Exemptions also are provided for condominiums in Michigan, currently regulated by the Department of Commerce; state agencies, cities, townships, counties or other governmental units, and mobile home parks.

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The amendments also increase from 10 to 25 the number of lots, parcels or interests in land required before complying with the act—relieving the small developer from having to meet the extensive and complex filing requirements in the act.

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Do all the long runs first, to conserve material and avoid joints and seams in the attic. The insulation blanket can be easily cut with a pair of scissors. Use the odds and ends to finish off the small spots.

With batt insulation, you also press the material into place between the ceiling joists. Again, make sure the vapor-barrier side is down.

The same procedure is used to lay batt insulation as used with the blanket material, but make sure the batt pieces snugly butt-up against one another, end to end, to minimize air leaks.

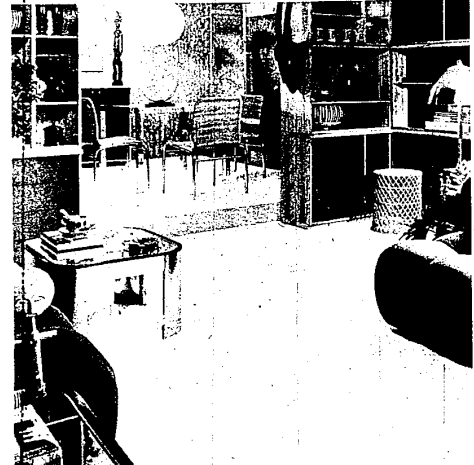
Pouring loose-fill insulation material is similarly easy. After a polyethylene sheet vapor barrier has been put in place, start at one end of the

ceiling and start pouring. Make sure you follow the manufacturer's recommendations on proper thickness and coverage per bag.

The loose material can be leveled with a garden rake or wood slat. Small openings and corners should be hand-packed with loose-fill to make sure that all heat is retained and cold air kept out during the winter.

Properly installed insulation is a lifetime investment for your house. The savings in fuel costs can pay for the job in a few years.

For additional information on benefits gained from properly insulating your home, contact your local building supply store or call the local Consumers Power office for assistance.



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