

# actsmart<sup>®</sup>

## draught proofing your home

Did you know that up to 25% of heat loss in your house comes from air leaks and draughts? This factsheet explains what draught proofing is and outlines the main sources of draughts. It also gives you tips on how to draught proof your home.

## What is draught proofing?

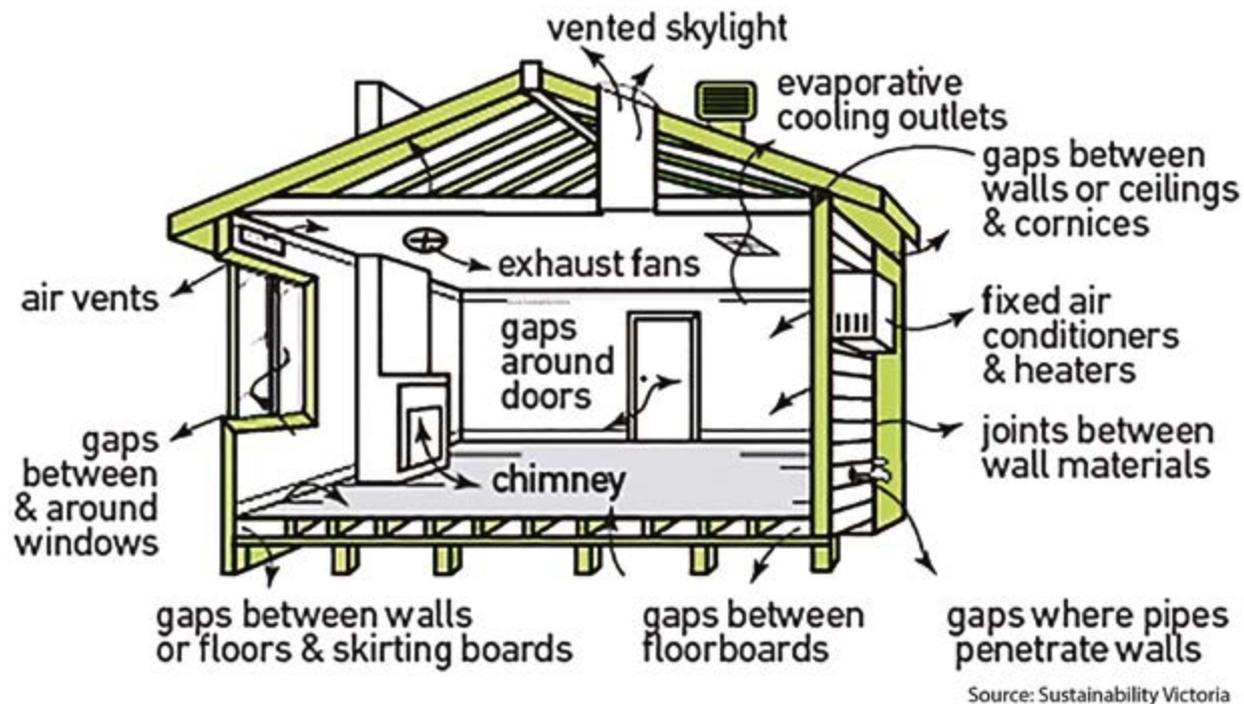
Draught proofing is about sealing your home as tightly as possible to stop uncontrolled air flow.

Most older homes have so many open vents, cracks and gaps, that if you put all the gaps together in one spot it would be equivalent to having a medium-sized window open all the time. No wonder we spend so much money on heating our homes!

Getting fresh air into your home is important for air quality and your comfort. By sealing your homes as well as possible and then opening a window when you want fresh air, you can have good air quality and not waste energy and money.

## What are the main sources of draughts?

Check out this diagram. It will help you figure out where the gaps are in your home and then fix them.

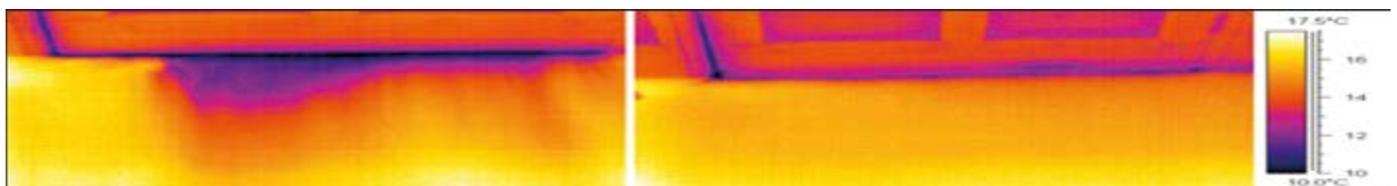


### Did you know?

Windy days are great for looking for draughts because the problem is accentuated.

### Here are tips for finding gaps:

- ✓ Check for rattling or whistling around doors and windows.
- ✓ Shut a door or window on a \$5 note. If you can pull the note out without it dragging you're losing energy.
- ✓ Feel for moving air around doors, windows, electrical and plumbing outlets, fireplaces, vents, exhaust fans, floorboards, architraves, cornices, skirting boards and other areas.
- ✓ On a windy day move a burning incense stick or mozzie coil around suspected draught areas to see if the smoke moves. If it does you have an air leak.
- ✓ Check for potential gaps from outside at night when the lights are on inside. If you can see light shining through you need to take action.
- ✓ Get a professional to conduct an air-leakage analysis (also known as a blower door test) on your house.



## Fixing draughts—where to start

Door seals, weather seal tape, and other gap-filling products are affordable and readily available from your hardware store. They only require basic skills to install.

A great place to start is sealing doors. For under \$50 you should be able to get doors seals and weather strip tape to seal your worst three or four doors.

### Want some more help?

Call the Actsmart free advice line: 02 1300 141 177

Check out the DIY draught proofing videos on the Actsmart website:  
<https://www.actsmart.act.gov.au/what-can-i-do/homes/energy-service>

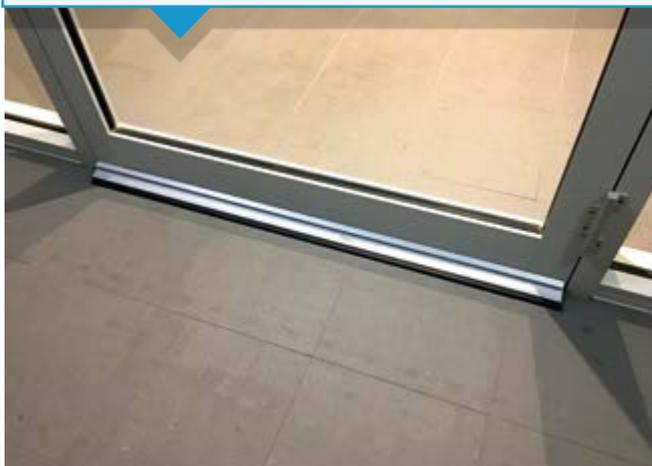
Call an insulation company or handyman service that does draught proofing for quotes.

### Door seals:

- ✓ Some seals are designed for internal doors and others for external doors.
- ✓ Internal door seals are installed on the back of doors. They have a strip of rubber or a plastic brush that seals with the floor. They often have adhesive backing to stick them to the door but will generally last longer if screwed on as well.
- ✓ Double-sided door snakes are another great option for internal doors. They're easy to take on and off.
- ✓ A common type of seal for external doors is called an automatic hinged door-seal. They are made of aluminium with a hinged rubber flap that folds down against the floor when the door closes and then pops up when the door opens to keep clear of carpet or other surfaces. Use screws and ideally a cordless drill to attach them to the door.

### TIP:

As well as reducing draughts, external door seals help keep out noise, dust and insects.



### Weather seal tape

- ✓ Apply adhesive foam or rubber tape to frames where there are gaps when doors and windows are closed. The closing action of hinged doors or windows compresses the tape creating a seal.
- ✓ Seal doors or windows that rattle in the wind or when you jiggle the handle.
- ✓ Clean surfaces before fitting.
- ✓ Try thinner weather strip if doors and windows don't close properly.
- ✓ Add additional layers or use different thickness tape if gaps size varies around a window or door.

### TIP:

You will get a good seal when foam or rubber compresses between 10% and 30%.



## Sealant



Use a caulking gun to apply sealant for:

- ✓ skirting boards and architraves
- ✓ cracks in walls
- ✓ window frames
- ✓ general gaps.

Always read the manufacturer's label, wear gloves and, if necessary, use eye protection.

## Expanding foam



Use expanding foam for:

- ✓ large gaps
- ✓ hollows
- ✓ cavities (for example, around fire places).

This can be messy to apply so be careful. Always read the manufacturer's label, wear gloves and, if necessary, use eye protection.

## Evaporative cooler vents

- ✓ Cover vents with either contact paper or specially designed magnetised vent covers over the cooler months to avoid heat loss
- ✓ Seal around the vent to prevent draughts.

## Gap filler rod



Use gap filler rod for:

- ✓ skirting boards
- ✓ large gaps
- ✓ vents.

Gap filler rod comes in a range of thicknesses for different sized gaps or vents.

## Recessed downlights

### Did you know?

Halogen downlights create a lot of heat. They usually have a small gap around them and a hole in the insulation above them to dissipate the heat. This creates a chimney effect, sucking heat out of a room.

While it's possible to retrofit an LED bulb into existing fittings, a much better option is to replace the whole fitting with a well-sealed LED unit that can be effectively insulated (check installation requirements carefully).

## Air quality

Draught proofing will allow you to control the air movement in and out of your home, making it more comfortable and energy efficient.

It's very difficult to seal your house too tightly, but the better job you do the more important it is to be aware of maintaining good air quality, for example opening a window. Unflued gas heaters and wood heaters can adversely affect indoor air quality so seek professional advice before draught proofing your home if you use these types of heaters.

## Other resources

Choosing a heating system factsheet

Staying warm on less energy factsheet

**For more ideas, tips and information  
visit: [actsmart.act.gov.au](http://actsmart.act.gov.au)  
email: [actsmart@act.gov.au](mailto:actsmart@act.gov.au)  
or call: 13 22 81**

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