



May 22, 2014

LETTER TO HOMEOWNERS:

Save Energy and Money on Your Utility Bill – Have Your Ducts Sealed

The largest single source of energy consumption in California homes is the cooling and heating system. When this system is installed properly, you will increase energy efficiency in your home and save money on your utility bill. You and/or your contractor are required to do two things when installing or replacing your central air conditioning and/or heating system: 1) Take out a building permit, and 2) Have your duct system sealed.

Take Out a Building Permit

Yes, a building permit is required for the installation or replacement of a heating and/or cooling system. Failing to obtain a required permit is violation of law, and risks exposure to additional cost and liability. Real estate transactions require disclosures to potential buyers about permits and Code compliance. If work was done without a permit, you may be required to bring your home into compliance with Code before selling it. Additionally, your homeowner's insurance coverage may be at risk if it is found that improvements to your home were done without a permit. Consult with your policy carrier for more information.

Have Your Duct System Sealed

Most homes have a duct system that delivers cooled or heated air from the air conditioning or heating unit to the home's living spaces. The average duct system leaks about 30 percent of the conditioned air into the attic or crawl space. Properly sealed ducts will make your home more comfortable and help lower your utility bill.

For existing homes, the 2013 Building Energy Efficiency Standards require testing of ducts, after a central air conditioning and/or heating system is installed or replaced, with some exceptions. Your installer will test to determine if your ducts have been properly sealed. As a quality assurance step, your installation may be included in a random verification by a third-party field specialist, known as a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Rater, at no additional cost to you. If your duct system is verified, and a HERS Rater finds that it leaks 15 percent or more, the installer will be required to properly seal your ducts, at no additional cost to you.

Note that duct sealing is not required, and should not be performed, if existing ducts are constructed, insulated, or sealed with asbestos-based materials. If asbestos is suspected, contact the Contractors State Licensing Board for more information at (800) 321-2752, or obtain [A Consumer's Guide to Asbestos](http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Resources/GuidesAndPublications/AsbestosGuideForConsumers.pdf), at: <http://www.cslb.ca.gov/Resources/GuidesAndPublications/AsbestosGuideForConsumers.pdf>

For more information on the Energy Standards, please call the Energy Standards Hotline at (916) 654-5106, or toll-free in California at (800) 772-3300.



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