**Keep heated and cooled air in ducts**

The ducts for a forced-air heating and air-conditioning system can be one of your home’s biggest energy wasters, especially if those ducts run through unheated or uncooled spaces (like attics or crawl spaces).

Properly sealed ducts can deliver heated/cooled air where you need it, instead of leaking out where you don’t. This allows your furnace/air conditioner to work less to make you comfortable.

- Check the ducts for air leaks, including around the filter cover. Repair leaking joints first with sheet-metal screws; then seal joints with either latex-based mastic with embedded fiberglass mesh or metal/foil tape (UL 181). Don’t use plastic or cloth duct tape because it will harden, crack, and lose its adhesion.
- Wrap ducts in attics/crawl spaces with special duct insulation. Seal all insulation joints with the appropriate tape.
- Make sure ducts fit tightly to the register openings in floors and walls; if they don’t, seal them with caulk.
- Seal return ducts, too, so you won’t be breathing basement or crawl space air.
- Make sure registers and baffles are adjusted properly to distribute heated and cooled air to where you need it. For example, in the winter close registers in unused rooms.
- Don’t confuse *duct-sealing* with *duct-cleaning!* There are no energy-related benefits to duct-cleaning.