## Home outlets and switches, a source for heat loss?

Many homes have outlets and switches located on their outside walls. This is a necessity to meet building codes and to provide homeowners with some conveniences.

Unfortunately these outlets/switches are sometimes small holes in the homes insulation system. Fiberglass batts are the most commonly used insulation in our area. The problem when combining fiberglass batt insulation with outlets/switches is that installers find it difficult to insulate around and behind the electrical boxes the outlets/switches are located in. In some homes, they just don't bother insulating behind the electrical boxes. Many times when installers insulate behind the electrical boxes, they don't cut out a void in the batts for the electrical box, they just squeeze the insulation in behind the box. By compressing the batt it loses much of its insulating value. Even when the batts are installed correctly, the electrical box reduces the amount of insulation in that part of the wall creating a thermal weak point.

This weak point can sometimes be felt on those cold days by simply placing your hand near the outlet/switch (caution, as we all know, outlets and switches are used to conduct electricity.) There is a simple cost effective fix. Foam gaskets are available at most local hardware stores, electrical suppliers or online.

Installing these gaskets is fairly simple but if you're not comfortable, it's advisable you contact an electrician or a local handyman to install these for you. Please remember outlets and switches are electrically charged and can cause bodily damage and sometimes fire!

Step 1:

Remove outlet or switch wall cover plate.

Step 2:

Install foam gasket.

Step 3:

Install outlet or switch wall cover plate.

The gaskets will help keep the cold air out and the warm air in.

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