

# Clean Air Clean Energy

## *EnerGuide for Houses Professional Audit- A house call from the energy doctor*

In 2000, my wife and I had an EnerGuide audit done on our home. The staff evaluated our house from basement to attic and dispensed good advice along the way. They checked the efficiency of our insulation, windows, furnace and hot water tank. They set up a huge specialized vacuum fan in a doorway to test for air leaks and measure fresh air exchange. The data was put into a computer and we received a customized Home Energy Plan that included recommendations for improvements and an estimate of how much money we'd save by completing them. Since the EnerGuide evaluators don't do the upgrades, we were comfortable that their advice was impartial.

With the vacuum fan on, small drafts turned into cold breezes. We learned that our 1970s-era house was quite leaky. EnerGuide suggested making it more airtight up to a certain level, while maintaining good fresh air exchange. We were sure we'd have to replace our 30-year-old windows, but they were actually fine. In fact, EnerGuide said that many people expect that they'll need costly new windows to improve their energy efficiency, when often some caulking in the right places will help as much. Surprisingly, our newest window was the draftiest. It was easily fixed with caulking. We had a couple of rooms that had always been cold and it turned out that there were major leaks in places we hadn't suspected, including one that let car exhaust from the garage enter a bedroom!

EnerGuide said that the average house in Canada has "cracks and leaks that add up to a hole big enough for a St. Bernard dog to lumber through". Most of our insulation turned out to be fine so it wasn't expensive to make the improvements they suggested. With some strategic air sealing and insulation, our house is now more comfortable and efficient. EnerGuide visited my office with similar results. Freezing cold, drafty parts of the building are now fine and my energy bills are down significantly. We reduced roof icing problems too.

For an EnerGuide visit, you can contact:

- The Elora Centre for Environmental Excellence, 519-763-2854, [ecee@web.net](mailto:ecee@web.net) or [barrick@ecee.on.ca](mailto:barrick@ecee.on.ca)
- WindFall Eco-Works, 1-866-280-4431, [info@windfallecoworks.com](mailto:info@windfallecoworks.com)
- Halton Hills Home Inspection Services, 1-866-501-1112, [cooper@aztec-net.com](mailto:cooper@aztec-net.com)

There is more information at <http://www.homeperformanceexperts.com/>

### ***The cost:***

The audit costs \$150-\$200 in Caledon. The upgrades will obviously vary. EnerGuide has done 4000 home visits in Ontario and the average recommended retrofit was \$2000.

### ***The bonus:***

More comfort, fewer cold or drafty spots, and lots of money saved on heating bills. The estimated cost saving for the average household was 23% of their energy bill or \$400 per year. Some could save up to 50%. This translates into a 2-5 year payback. As part of our Kyoto commitments, the government is considering paying \$1000 towards these improvements - a double bonus.

Shopping close to home is a great way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, so be sure to buy materials or hire contractors locally.

### ***The environmental bonus:***

The average household could reduce 3.5 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions after its retrofit. (CO<sub>2</sub> is the major gas responsible for climate change.) This is almost 3 times the Kyoto target for each Canadian! These home improvements reduce your smog emissions too.

If you have an EnerGuide audit and act on the recommendations, you can use this for your Caledon Countryside Alliance "Step Up to Kyoto" pledge (<http://www.woodrising.com/cca/stepup.htm> ).

If you would like more information about this or other issues in the Caledon Clean Air Clean Energy Program, you can reach us at [greenenergy@woodrising.com](mailto:greenenergy@woodrising.com), 519-927-0548.

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Caledon Clean Air Clean Energy Program



**Step Up to Kyoto. Future generations will thank you a tonne.**

**ENERGUIDE** EnerGuide is the official Government of Canada mark associated with the labelling and rating of the energy consumption or energy efficiency of household appliances, heating and ventilation equipment, air conditioners, houses and vehicles. For more information visit <http://energiguide.nrcan.gc.ca/html/home.html>