



# Build It Back Green

## *Weatherproof Your Home*

### BENEFITS

According to the Department of Energy, **at least 40% of the energy used to heat and cool a building is lost by air leakage.** Air leakage is when outside air enters a building through cracks and openings. In the winter, cold air seeps into your house, replacing the warm heated air which escapes. In the summer, the opposite happens. As a result, you may be **losing hundreds of dollars each year** as cooled or heated air escapes through the cracks in your house.

It has been estimated that proper weatherproofing techniques, such as caulking, sealing, and weatherstripping all seams, cracks, and openings to the outside can **reduce your heating and cooling bills by \$400 each year!**

### DESCRIPTION & CHARACTERISTICS

PRODUCT	DESCRIPTION
Weatherstripping	Tack-on or adhesive-backed material such as vinyl, foam, felt, V-shaped metal, rubber, and silicone strips. Install along sides and tops of windows and doors, as well as along the sides of wall unit air conditioners.
Caulk	An acrylic, silicon, or latex based sealant. Seal gaps less than ¼" wide around windows and doors, as well as along siding corners, chimney flashing and masonry joints.
Foam Sealant	Expanding polyurethane or water-based foam. Seal gaps greater than ¼" wide around penetrations in roof and around foundation, chimney, and siding.
Door Sweeps & Thresholds	Door sweeps are a flexible vinyl strip or polyester brush that attaches to the exterior bottom of a door. Thresholds are fastened to the floor beneath a door and they prevent air entry.
Electrical Switch & Outlet Gaskets	Foam sheet material that can be installed behind electric switch and outlet plate covers.
Attic Hatch/Stair Cover	Insulated covering that fits around an attic opening.
Air Conditioner Covers	Rigid or soft insulating cover that fits on the inside of a window or through-the-wall air conditioner unit.

Products & Practices Sheets



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## PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT & INSTALLATION TIPS

- The first step in weatherproofing your home is to determine where air leakage occurs. You may hire a technician through the Louisiana Home Energy Rebate Option (HERO) program to conduct an energy audit or you can use the methods described below to detect air leakages yourself:
  - **The paper test:** Shut a window or door on a piece of paper. If you can pull the paper out without tearing it, then you've got a leak.
  - **The flashlight test:** At night, turn off the home's interior and exterior lights, and shine a flashlight over all potential gaps while a partner stands outside and observes where rays of lights shine through. This is a good way to detect large cracks but not small ones.
  - **The incense test:** On a windy day, walk around the house with a lit incense stick, passing next to each window, exterior door, and other possible places where there is an air path to the outside. Smoke that gets sucked away or blown into the room indicates a leak that may need sealing.
- Prioritize your weatherproofing efforts by sealing all the big holes first, then the large cracks and penetrations, and finally the smaller cracks and seams.

## PRODUCT TYPES & PRICES

PRODUCT	PRICE
Weatherstripping	\$2 to \$8 for 10 foot roll
Caulk	\$2 to \$6 per 10 ounce tube
Foam Sealant	\$5 to \$10 per 12 to 16 ounce can
Door Sweeps & Thresholds	\$20 each
Electrical Switch & Outlet Gaskets	\$2 each
Attic Hatch/Stair Cover	\$30 to \$145
Air Conditioner Covers	\$20 to \$60

- The estimated cost of weatherproofing a typical 1200 square foot shotgun house can range from \$200 to \$300.
- Weatherproofing products may be purchased at Home Depot. Other local suppliers are identified on the **Vendors List** available on our website at [globalgreen.org/bibg](http://globalgreen.org/bibg) and in the **New Orleans Green Building Resource Center** at 841 Carondelet Street.