

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM



Maryland Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®



The Maryland Home Performance Program is the best way for you to significantly reduce your energy bills while improving comfort and decreasing your home's contribution to climate change. A participating contractor with the Maryland Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program is trained and certified to diagnose your home for issues such as drafty rooms, hot or cold rooms, mold and moisture problems, and other hidden causes for high energy bills.

This "What to Expect" brochure, along with the website, www.mdhomeperformance.org, will guide you through the Maryland Home Performance with ENERGY STAR process from the contractor's initial visit to your home, installation of energy efficiency work, and on through project completion. It will outline what you can expect from your certified Home Performance Contractor, your responsibilities as a customer, and how to get additional information.

STEP
1

FIND YOUR CONTRACTOR

The Maryland Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program has created a network of **independent** home improvement contractors who have been trained and certified by the Building Performance Institute (BPI). BPI is a national non-profit that credentials individuals and organizations who assess and improve the energy performance and health and safety of homes. Your contractor, through participation in Maryland's Program, has been trained to take a 'whole-house' approach when evaluating your home and identifying energy efficiency improvements. Maryland Home Performance has a rigorous quality assurance protocol in place so you can rest assured that your certified contractor will help solve your home's energy and comfort issues. For a list of participating contractors, please visit www.mdhomeperformance.org and click on "Find a Contractor."

In partnership
with:



Program
Sponsor:



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STEP

2

THE HOME PERFORMANCE ENERGY AUDIT

Once you have selected a certified Home Performance Contractor, they will perform a

Home Performance Energy Audit, which generally **lasts two to three hours.** The audit will provide you with valuable information regarding the existing condition of your home, and **identify areas where energy efficiency, comfort and health/safety improvements can be made.**

Before the audit, the contractor will ask to see at least **one year's worth of your utility bills.** Please have this information readily available. In addition, you should let your contractor know any issues or concerns you have about your home. You are encouraged to **accompany the contractor as they perform the audit.** During the audit, the contractor completes a **visual inspection** of the living space, attic, basement (or crawl spaces), and performs a number of tests using special diagnostic equipment. This equipment includes a **blower door**, which helps the contractor measure how much, and where, air is leaking from your home. Most importantly, your contractor will perform essential **health and safety tests** to determine whether the major **combustion appliances** (furnace, boiler, hot water tank, stove, etc.) in your home are operating safely. *Please note:* according to BPI health and safety standards, if these tests identify any potential threats in the home, the recommended health and safety repairs must be included in any work scope you choose to implement.



Blower Door Test

Which Home Performance Contractor should I hire?

Find a list of contractors doing work in your area by visiting www.MDHomePerformance.org and click on "Find a Contractor." Research the list of contractors by visiting their website, contacting the company, and even asking for referrals! Note that some contractors perform the energy audit and the recommended work. Others only perform the energy audit and may refer you to other contractors to perform the work. The services listed for each company will aid you in choosing the contractor that is right for you.

The Home Performance Audit Report

When the energy audit is complete you will receive a Home Performance Audit Report from your certified contractor. The report will explain what improvements can be made and the associated costs and benefits. **In addition to estimates of fuel and energy bill savings, the report will include information on the payback that can be expected from the project.** The report will also include information on the non-energy benefits of the home improvements, including draft reduction and other health and comfort improvements.

Paying for the Work

The certified Maryland Home Performance Contractor typically will charge a fee between roughly \$250 and \$600 for the energy audit. The fee varies depending on the contractor, the region, and the size of the house. The certified contractor may deduct the fee from the cost of installing energy-efficient upgrades. When talking to a participating contractor be sure to ask about the fee and whether or not it is deductible from the contracted work.

Homeowners are responsible for the full payment of upgrades. Please see www.mdhomeperformance.org for a list of lenders in Maryland that handle loans and lines of credit. Please note that Maryland Home Performance does not endorse any financial institutions, their services or their products. Maryland Home Performance highly suggests comparing the various rates and terms.



Inspecting an HVAC Unit

STEP 3

THE CUSTOMER CONTRACT

When you have decided on the improvements you want, you will be presented with a written contract to review and sign.

Check this contract carefully.

- Make sure that all the work you want done is detailed, that everything you want to have installed is in the contract, and that there is nothing that you do not want, or do not understand, in the contract.
- In general, the price offered should be a fixed price that cannot be changed without your written permission (see section on "Change Orders"). Be sure the contract clearly states whether it is a fixed-price contract or an estimate.
- The contract should cover payment terms, such as a down payment, installment payments and when the final payment is due.
- The program only recognizes contracts between a customer and certified Maryland Home Performance Contractors.

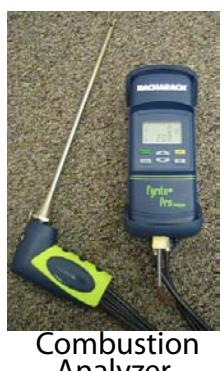


Testing for Gas Leaks

Your contractor may subcontract work to other companies as they put together a comprehensive set of energy efficiency and health and safety measures. You may not be in the position to make ALL the recommended investments in your home at one time. Therefore, you may work with a Maryland Home Performance contractor multiple times.



Performing the Audit



Combustion Analyzer

STEP 4

SIGNING THE CONTRACT

When you have reviewed the contract document and are satisfied, sign the contract and make a copy for your records.

At this time, you should also discuss with your contractor the expected start and completion dates of the project.

Change Orders

The work scope may change during the course of the job. Some causes of these changes include the following:

- You decide to add or remove something from the work scope.
- The contractor discovers a problem (e.g. roof damage, leaks, etc.).
- An opportunity for additional improvements presents itself during construction or installation.

For example, your insulation contractor may discover damage to the roof structure while insulating and air sealing an attic, or the heating contractor may find a pipe leak while replacing your boiler. Changes in the work scope are called a "Change Order." The contractor will give you a signed copy of the change order and provide the program with a copy. Be sure you fully understand the impacts before you agree to the change. The program requires that, unless warranted by special circumstances such as health and safety or lack of heat during winter, change orders be signed, dated and submitted before the new measures are installed.

STEP 5

INSTALLATION OF YOUR ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS

At the time you sign your contract, you and your contractor should arrange a time for work to begin and estimate the date it will be completed. It is strongly recommended that, at a minimum, you arrange to meet with the contractor at the beginning of each day before work begins, and at the end of the day to review work progress to ensure that all terms of the contract are being fulfilled. These meetings will allow you to follow the work progress and help you better understand the impact the work will have on your home. Being involved is particularly important if a heating or cooling system is being installed. This will give you the opportunity to see how the system operates, and to learn what type of maintenance is recommended. Be aware that as the work is being performed, the normal routine of your household may be disrupted. Also, it is recommended that cleanup of work areas be included in the contract.

CLOSING OUT THE JOB

STEP
6

FINAL HOME EVALUATION

The energy efficiency work performed on your home will often result in your home being more airtight. To ensure that the increased air tightness does not cause air quality or combustion health and safety problems, your contractor is required to repeat the tests performed during the Home Performance Energy Audit. This process is referred to as Pre- and Post-Testing or "Test-In/Test-Out." It is a requirement of the program that these tests be completed and strongly recommended that you be present during the tests. On rare occasions, this test process will reveal conditions that do not meet the program's health, safety, and technical requirements. Should this be the case, your Home Performance Contractor will recommend modifications to bring your home into compliance with **program standards**. Final tests are an added layer of quality control so you can be assured that all work was done properly.

STEP
7

HOME PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

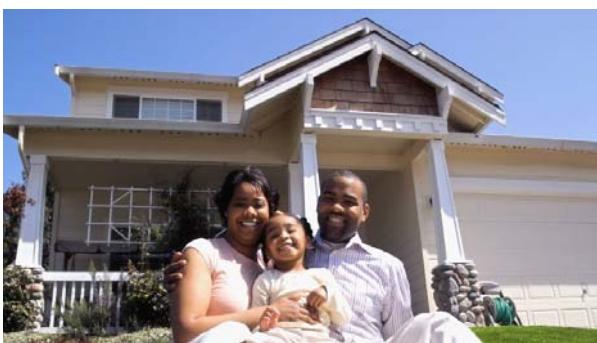
When all of the work in the original scope of work, the change orders, and final tests are completed, the Home Performance Contractor will prepare a Job Completion Report for your review and signature. The Report includes a list of completed upgrades, including total installed cost, predicted energy savings, and additional non-energy benefits (such as predicted carbon dioxide savings, comfort, and health improvements). Your contractor will submit a copy of this signed report to Maryland Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. In order to receive a Home Performance Certificate you must have at least three qualified energy improvements or energy savings of 10% or more. If your home achieves these energy savings, Maryland Home Performance will send you a Home Performance Certificate in the mail. This certificate will reveal your home's annual carbon dioxide emissions reduction due to your new energy efficient improvements.

STEP
8

QUALITY ASSURANCE

After completion of all energy efficiency improvements you will be asked about your **satisfaction with the contractor** and to add any suggestions for improving the Program. These comments will not be seen by your Home Performance Contractor and will be considered seriously in order to enhance the Program.

In addition to this survey, you may be contacted by a Maryland Home Performance Administrator to have your home inspected by the Program to verify the contractor's work. This added layer of quality assurance ensures that contractors maintain **high levels of professionalism** in their work.



Home Performance Glossary

A Blower Door measures the airtightness of a home and is used to locate air leaks. This special fan can ensure that air sealing work is effective.

ENERGY STAR® is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy that helps businesses and individuals save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices.



Thermography Reading

"**R-value**" refers to how effective insulation is at blocking the transfer of heat and maintaining temperatures within the home. The higher the R-value, the more effective the insulation.

Thermography is the use of thermal infrared imaging in order to detect where and how much energy is leaking from a home.

The "**Whole House**" Approach to energy auditing looks at your home as an integrated system. Certified Maryland Home Performance Contractors use this approach in order to give comprehensive improvements that yield the best results.

