

Weather Stripping Windows and Doors

Housing Fact Sheets



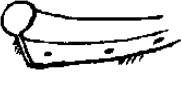
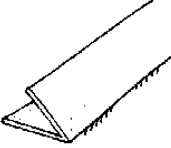
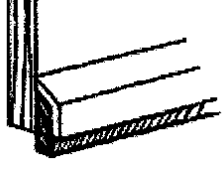
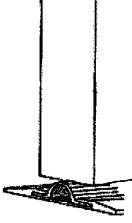

Air leakage, or infiltration, is outside air that enters your home through cracks and openings in the walls, ceilings, and floor of your home. Because air infiltration can account for as much as 30% of a home's heating costs, you can stop losing money by sealing these air leaks. While most air leakage occurs through holes and cracks in ceilings and floors, a significant amount of air leaks through cracks around windows and doors. This is especially true in homes with older windows and doors. This Fact Sheet contains information you can use to determine if windows and doors in your home need weatherstripping and to choose among weatherstripping products.

Weatherstripping is needed when:

- An operable window moves and rattles when it is in a closed position.
- A length of thread or bathroom tissue indicates air movement through a crack.
- Indoor light can be seen through a crack from outside the house.
- A piece of paper slides easily through a closed opening.

Weatherstripping is used between movable parts and operable openings such as windows and doors. For example, it can be placed along the edges of window sashes and doorjamb. Weatherstripping is made from narrow strips of metal, plastic, or foam, and is held in place with nails, staples, or adhesives. Choosing among various types depends on consumer preferences for cost, ease of installation, durability, and other factors. Characteristics of the various types available at home centers and department stores are listed in the following chart. Most packages include installation instructions.

Table 1: Weatherstripping Materials¹

Type of Weatherstripping	Service Life	Characteristics
 Self adhesive foam	1-2 years	Easy to install; limited durability
 Felt	2 years	Inexpensive; Easy to apply; Limited durability
 Rolled vinyl or tubular gasket	5 years +	Visible when applied. Must make contact for proper seal
 Tension spring plastic or metal V-shaped strips	Plastic: 5 years Metal 5-8 years	Both metal and plastic are easy to apply. Good for uniform openings. Flexible along its length for larger openings
 Door sweep (Metal spine, vinyl edge)	5 years +	Easy to apply; vinyl is flexible over adjacent flooring materials
 Metal door threshold with Vinyl bulb	5 years +	Flexible vinyl adjusts to fit door opening.
 Nylon brush fin seal	5 years +	Used to replace worn weatherstripping on aluminum windows and doors and triple track storm windows

¹ Written by Trudy Wythe and Joe Laquatra, Department of Design and Environmental Analysis, March 1986. Reviewed and revised by Mark Pierce, Extension Associate, November 00