

## Getting an Energy Audit

An energy audit is a professional assessment of the energy efficiency of a home or building. It can help you find out where you're losing energy and what you can do to save money.

The U.S. Department of Energy says you can save 5-30 percent on your energy bill by getting an audit and taking appropriate action.

### FINDING AN AUDITOR

If your local government has an energy or weatherization office, it may be able to identify an audit professional. So can your utility company. As with any home service professional, the Department of Energy says to get several estimates and make sure to contact references and the Better Business Bureau.

### BEFORE THE VISIT

Compile the last year of energy bills and make note of problems like condensation or drafty rooms. Think about the following lifestyle questions:

Is anyone home during working hours?

What is the average thermostat setting in each season?

Is every room in use?

### DURING THE VISIT

The auditor uses a variety of specialty tools to determine your energy uses.

**Infrared cameras:** These



© ADOBE STOCK

ferences in air pressure to help an auditor find leaks and test exhaust devices.

### WHAT THE AUDITOR LOOKS FOR

The auditor will check for air leaks around outlets, windows, doors and fixtures. They will also inspect the fireplace, if there is one. They will also check your thermostat and carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Windows and doors will be checked for condensation, and they'll also look at your air registers and insulation and framing. They may also check for lead paint and any other indoor air quality problems.

They should also perform a blower door test, which helps them check for air leaks. The average home, the Department of Energy says, has enough air leaks to equal a medium-sized window being open all day.

### DIY

While a professional audit may be the most thorough way to find out where your money is going, there are a few things you can do yourself.

Check for obvious leaks around baseboards, doors, windows and outlets. Seal the leaks with the appropriate material, like caulk or weatherstripping. You can also check your insulation, especially if you have an older home.

### REAL ESTATE 101

#### Garage Doors and Energy

The topic of insulating your garage door is not as straightforward as it might seem. According to EnergyStar.gov, you might not need to insulate it at all. According to EnergyStar.gov: "If you keep a car, paints, chemicals, or a lawn mower in the garage the fumes from these items could leak into your house if the garage is part of the 'conditioned space.' In this case, it would be better to insulate the wall between the house and garage to seal out any garage fumes."

cameras help determine air leakage.

**Combustion analyzer:**

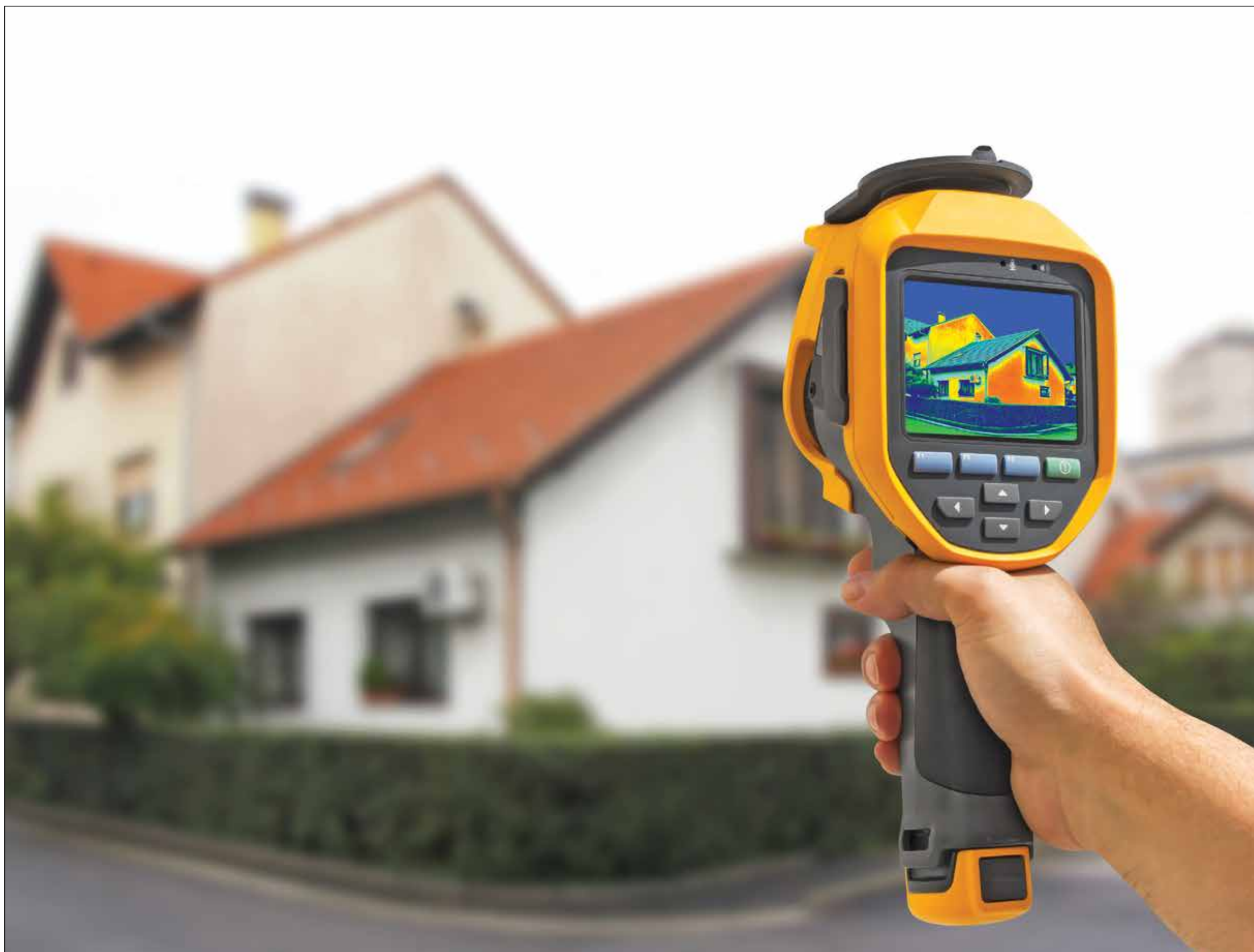
Samples flue gases in vented

appliances and measures gas flue gas temperatures, leaks and carbon monoxide.

**Blower door:** A large fan that

depressurizes the house and allows the auditor to find air leaks.

**Manometer:** Measures dif-



© ADOBE STOCK

## Getting an Energy Audit

An energy audit is a professional assessment of the energy efficiency of a home or building. It can help you find out where you're losing energy and what you can do to save money.

The U.S. Department of Energy says you can save 5-30 percent on your energy bill by getting an audit and taking appropriate action.

### FINDING AN AUDITOR

If your local government has an energy or weatherization office, it may be able to identify an audit profession-

al. So can your utility company. As with any home service professional, the Department of Energy says to get several estimates and make sure to contact references and the Better Business Bureau.

### BEFORE THE VISIT

Compile the last year of energy bills and make note of problems like condensation or drafty rooms. Think about the following lifestyle questions:

- Is anyone home during working hours?
- What is the average thermostat setting in each season?
- Is every room in use?

### DURING THE VISIT

The auditor uses a variety of specialty tools to determine your energy uses.

**Infrared cameras:** These cameras

help determine air leakage.

**Combustion analyzer:** Samples flue gases in vented appliances and measures gas flue gas temperatures, leaks and carbon monoxide.

**Blower door:** A large fan that depressurizes the house and allows the auditor to find air leaks.

**Manometer:** Measures differences in air pressure to help an auditor find leaks and test exhaust devices.

### WHAT THE AUDITOR LOOKS FOR

The auditor will check for air leaks around outlets, windows, doors and fixtures. They will also inspect the fireplace, if there is one. They will also check your thermostat and carbon monoxide and smoke detectors. Windows and doors will be checked for condensation, and they'll also look at your air registers and insulation and

framing. They may also check for lead paint and any other indoor air quality problems.

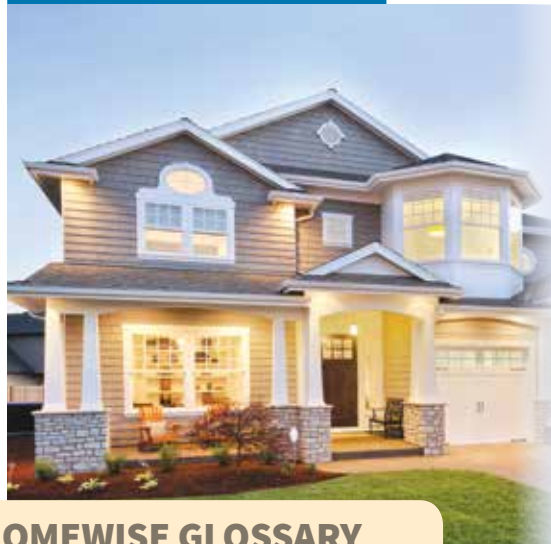
They should also perform a blower door test, which helps them check for air leaks. The average home, the Department of Energy says, has enough air leaks to equal a medium-sized window being open all day.

### DIY

While a professional audit may be the most thorough way to find out where your money is going, there are a few things you can do yourself.

Check for obvious leaks around baseboards, doors, windows and outlets. Seal the leaks with the appropriate material, like caulk or weatherstripping. You can also check your insulation, especially if you have an older home.

### REAL ESTATE 101



### How Does Your Home Measure Up?

The Environmental Protection Agency offers a tool through its website to help homeowners assess the efficiency of their own homes. The Home Energy Yardstick allows homeowners to input simple data about their homes — such as ZIP code, square footage, list of fuels used, and past energy usage details from utility bills — and see how it compares to the annual energy usage of other similar homes. Find out more and see a sample results page at <https://bit.ly/1mzj9ll>.

### HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

**Ingress:** the right or permission to enter; also the means or place of entry such as a right-of-way across adjoining land.

SOURCE: Homeclosing101.org

# AD SPACE