



President's Column Central Hill Country Board of REALTORS®



by Carole Reed, 2025 President



HOME WEATHERIZATION AND WEATHERPROOFING GUIDE: Protect Your Home From Storms and Extreme Weather (2 of 2)

Get an Energy Audit - A professional energy audit can flag problem spots. Diagnostic tests may include a blower door test or infrared imaging to detect air leaks, and inspections of windows, doors, and appliances. Based on the findings, tackle your home's problem areas with caulk, weatherstripping, and other air-sealing methods. (Savings tip: Some utility companies offer a free or low-cost energy audit.)

Use Low-E Windows or Coverings - Window weatherproofing could consist of swapping in a Low-E coated glass or film to minimize heat loss. In colder climates, look for window weatherproofing film with higher solar heat gain coefficient, or SHGC, ratings — like 0.30 to 0.60 — which filter out less natural light, and for warmer climates, lower SHGC ratings — less than 0.27. Coverings like drapes can also help. One of the best investments, especially if your windows are old, is thermal curtains. They not only spruce up your interiors but also provide an additional layer of insulation to keep the cold out.

Fix Drafty Air Ducts - Ducts leaking even 20% of conditioned air passing through forces systems to work 50% harder and increases utility bills, finds a report from the University of Florida. A leaky duct can also cause higher indoor humidity, triggering mold and mildew. Most heating and air ducts are sealed with tape when first installed, but that tape can break down over time. Ductwork also may have holes or loose sections, rust, leaks, clogs, or condensation — all requiring repairs by HVAC professionals.

Plant Windbreaks - Landscaping can provide windbreaks to reduce wind around a home by up to 50%, as well as prevent snow drifts and reduce heating costs, according to the Department of Energy. "Dense evergreen trees and shrubs planted to the north and the northwest of the home are the most common type of windbreak," the DOE notes. "Trees, bushes, and shrubs are often planted together to block or impede wind from ground level to the treetops." A row of evergreen and deciduous trees, such as maple trees, can be effective, but two rows of staggered trees create a denser wind screen.

Install Attic Insulation - Substantial amounts of heat can quickly be lost in a poorly insulated attic. The North American Insulation Manufacturer Association estimates nearly 90% of existing homes in America are under insulated. Extra attic insulation also can protect pipes — like water lines in the attic — from freezing and bursting.

Upgrade Windows and Doors - Weatherproofed exterior doors and windows are more energy-efficient. Windows consist of double panes of glass, and doors have extra insulation. This is both a great way to save on your bills and increase the value of your home. Depending on your climate, hurricane shutters — made of aluminum, steel, or polycarbonate — can add protection against wind-blown debris. Also, storm windows and doors that fit over the outside of existing ones add a protective layer.

Replace Your Roof - Roofs typically last 20 to 30 years. When your roof is due for replacement, consider weatherproof roofing materials. Pricier metal or tile roofs are more apt to withstand heavy winds and rain than lower-cost asphalt shingles, which gusty winds can tear off. Depending on your climate, hail-resistant shingles could benefit you. Whether your roof is in good condition or not, you can always make it more weatherproof. For example, rigid insulation boards or a new weatherproof layer can add insulation and protection. Also, solar panels can protect a home against power outages caused by extreme weather. The costs for installation — anywhere between \$10,000 to \$30,000 — may be offset with a 30% federal tax credit. Solar panels could save homeowners \$42,000 over 25 years. Your roof is your main line of defense against extreme weather, particularly wind and rain. Minor damage to a roof can result in some very expensive damage to the interior of the home. If your roof is worn out, see replacing it as a golden opportunity to make your house more climate resistant. New materials and technologies have helped roofs better withstand high winds.

Invest in Resilient Design - The smartest weatherproofing ideas come from the principles of resilient design, which incorporates elements like stronger windows and roofs, higher insulation, fire-resistant materials, and passive energy sources to create a home built for maximum protection. These improvements are more expensive than some of the routine fixes you may be used to, but investing in the long term will build your home's protection and save money over time.

~courtesy houselogic.com~

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