

Insulating your cavity walls



Why insulate your cavity walls?

New houses today have wall insulation built-in. That this is a requirement within government Building Regulations shows its importance.

Prior to 1982, houses were built to lower insulation standards and are much more expensive to heat. Why put up with this when cavity wall insulation will make the walls of your house thermally close to new build standards?

The government strongly recommends cavity wall insulation for all suitable existing buildings. "Up to half of all the heat lost in an average house goes straight through the walls. Proper wall insulation can stop up to two thirds of this heat loss". says the government department for energy efficiency. 'The proof of the success of cavity wall insulation is the large number of householders, who enjoy its trouble-free benefits – four million homes already have cavity wall insulation", they point out. The industry has over 30 years experience of treating homes to this process.

Why insulate your cavity walls?

Save expensive heat with low cost insulation

The fuel bill is a major household expense, year after year. The cost of cavity wall insulation is comparable with one year's central heating bill. This is very little when you consider that it is likely to save 25% of your fuel, every year, thus paying for itself within about four years. It will save you money immediately and go on saving money whilst you remain in the same house. This excellent investment may well provide more money in your pocket for the exciting things of life – like holidays and leisure.

And if you prefer to spread the payments, then most building societies will add this helpful home improvement to your mortgage. Or ask your N.C.I.A installer if he can provide credit.

Cavity wall insulation also adds to the overall value on resale of your property.

Be comfortable

Cavity wall insulation acts like a radiator, storing the heat within the inner walls, bouncing it back into the room and holding it for longer. This gives you a more even temperature and widens the useable living area by ridding your home of the draughts that come down the walls – normally just as many as from the windows. You are then able to turn down the heating and live in a healthier and more comfortable environment.



Prevent condensation on the walls

Condensation is a common problem in this country: it is due to poor ventilation, frequently coupled with inadequate heating, in a fairly humid climate. Condensation can result in mould growth, or even lead to rot – with damage to furnishings. Even more serious is the risk to health. Cavity wall insulation generally cures condensation on the inner walls, as it increases their temperature. Even with proper insulation, it is still necessary to have a reasonable level of background heat and adequate ventilation.

Keep cool in summer

Cavity wall insulation will help prevent excessive heat building up inside your home during a summer hot spell.

Improve the environment

You can play your part in making the country a better and cleaner place in which you live – for you and your family. By installing cavity wall insulation and encouraging your neighbours to do so too, less fuel will be burned into the atmosphere and fewer power stations will be needed in the future, resulting in less pollution.

Help the country's economy too

Standards of insulation in this country are still amongst the lowest in Europe. The recommendation from the government and every authority concerned with fuel conservation is that we see our homes are well insulated – for the sake of our own pockets, as well as for our country's economy.

What is cavity wall insulation?

Cavity wall insulation is mechanically injected into the cavity between the inner and outer leaves of brick and blockwork, that make up the external wall of your property. Systems using different insulating materials have been especially developed to completely fill the cavity. The insulant, together with still captive air, then acts as a barrier to heat loss, in place of free flowing currents of air in the cavity, which come inside your house, make you and your family feel uncomfortable and draw out your expensive heat.

Government figures show that up to 50% of your heat goes straight out through uninsulated walls. Some 70% of this can be saved following cavity wall insulation. This gives your house a U-value of around 0.45 – the recommendation for new houses. (This assumes a typical construction of a brick outer leaf, brick or block inner leaf plastered, and 65mm cavity.)

Once installed, cavity wall insulation is a permanent, maintenance-free home improvement, lasting for the life of the building, according to the government Building Research Establishment. The materials used for cavity wall insulation are mineral wool, u.f. foam and expanded polystyrene bead. These materials are all resistant to water penetration and will not transit water across the cavity or from below d.p.c. level by capillary action. However, they are not a water vapour barrier and any moisture that collects within the fabric of the building is allowed to disperse harmlessly into the outside atmosphere (provided normal 'breathable' constructional materials have been used). Materials do not affect the fire resistance of the walls; and they are resistant to rot, fungi and vermin.



The National Cavity Insulation Association

The Association exists to advise and protect householders, who commission a cavity wall insulation service from its members. It is an organisation of member companies concerned with maintaining high standards within the industry.

All members work to high industry technical standards, which are recognised by government. Mineral wool or expanded polystyrene bead is installed according to an Agrément Certificate: foam contractors are British Standards Registered Firms, installing to BS 5618 covering workmanship. Both the government sponsored British Board of Agrément and British Standards Institution carry out regular, sometimes unannounced, site visits to ensure that the standards are being maintained.

Continuing approval by one of these bodies is a membership requirement. No permission is required – just a simple notification by the contractor into the local authority – provided work is done in accordance with these standards.



Members are also required to abide by the Association's Code of Professional Practice that demands sound ethical practice and good customer service.

The Association rules that members must maintain their own Public and Product Liability insurance with an indemnity of £2M any one incident. or series of incidents. Members' individual policies are checked by the Association brokers at the time of application and on renewal. Members offer the 25-year industry guarantee covering the installation of cavity wall insulation., operated by the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency (CIGA).

The Association offers advice on individual queries and provides general and technical information on cavity wall insulation. Literature is available free, also a list of local members throughout the UK, who may be relied upon to provide a good service.

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