



# Build It Back Green

## Seal Leaks in Ductwork

### **BENEFITS**

You can **lose hundreds of dollars a year in utility bills** because your air ducts are not sealed properly. Leaky air ducts don't just affect your utility bills; they can also affect your health by allowing dust, mold, humidity, radon gas, pesticides, and carbon monoxide to enter your home from basements, attics, garages, and crawlspaces.

**Sealing ducts can reduce your home's heating and cooling energy use by 30%** because the cooled or heated air will go into the house where you want it, not in the attic or crawlspace. Also, sealing ducts can help improve indoor air quality by reducing the risk of pollutants entering ducts and circulating throughout your home.

### **DESCRIPTION & CHARACTERISTICS**



The duct system used in cooling and heating a house is a collection of tubes that distributes the cooled or heated air to rooms in your house.



This collection of tubes can be round or rectangular and can be made of sheet metal, fiberglass or other materials.

Leaks in your duct system may be caused by:

- Ducts that are disconnected
- Connections between ducts that are not properly sealed
- Connections between ducts that are sealed with poor quality materials
- Small or big holes in ducts



## **INSTALLATION & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT TIPS**

- The first step in determining if your system has leaky ducts is to assess the comfort level of your home.
  - Do you have high summer and winter utility bills as a result of your air conditioner and furnace running all the time?
  - Do you have rooms that are difficult to heat and cool?
  - Do you have stuffy rooms that never seem to feel comfortable?
  - Are your ducts located in an attic, basement, garage or crawlspace?
- Once you've determined that there is a comfort problem in your home, do a visual inspection of your ductwork. Some common locations to find leaks are where the ducts connect to vents, registers, and grills in walls, floors, and ceilings.
  - Are there any ducts that are disconnected or loose?
  - Are there any ducts that are tangled or kinked?
  - Are there any gaping holes?
- Take the following steps to repair leaky ducts:
  - Replace damaged ducts.
  - Straighten out tangled or kinked ducts.
  - Reconnect disconnected ducts and seal with mastic or metal tape. **DO NOT** use duct tape because its adhesive dries out and it does not provide a permanent seal.
  - Seal all vents, registers, and grills tightly to the ducts.
  - Relocate ducts from unconditioned spaces, such as attics and crawlspaces, to conditioned space. If that is not possible, then insulate ducts in unconditioned areas with duct insulation that has an R-value of 6 or higher.

## **PRODUCT TYPES & PRICES**

- The estimated cost of mastic or metal tape can range from \$8 to \$11. The estimated cost of sealing leaky ductwork in a typical 1200 square foot shotgun house can range from \$10 to \$25.
- Mastic and metal tape may be purchased at Home Depot. Other local suppliers are identified on the **Vendors List** available on our website at **[globalgreen.org/bibg](http://globalgreen.org/bibg)** and in the **New Orleans Green Building Resource Center** at 841 Carondelet Street.