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JANUARY • MISSION 01

Building-science guidance for Central Illinois homes

Operation Draft Sweep

Finding where winter air sneaks in and which rooms pay for it.

/ WHY THIS MONTH?

This is the deepest part of winter, so every air leak and cold surface is at its loudest. A cold morning is the best detective your house will ever hire.

/ THE HOMEOWNER'S MISSION

- Hand-test around windows and exterior doors. At electrical outlets on outside walls, check only for noticeable drafts around the outside of the cover plate — do not remove outlet covers or insert anything into the outlet.
- Note which rooms stay cold no matter where you set the thermostat.
- Check the attic hatch: feel for air moving through it or around its edges.
- Note window condensation on cold mornings, and where it shows up first.

/ WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Drafts you can feel at baseboards and trim
- Cold spots near exterior walls and windows
- Curtains that move even when the window is closed
- Frost or sweat forming on window glass

/ WHY IT MATTERS

Air leaks let heated air escape and cold air pour in, and cold surfaces pull heat out of a room. Both make rooms uncomfortable and force the furnace to run longer to keep up.

/ WHEN TO CALL GREEN PLATOON

It makes sense to get real data when:

- A room that never warms up no matter the thermostat setting
- Drafts you can feel but can't locate
- You're weighing air sealing or insulation and want proof before spending

A blower-door test measures how much air leaks through the building envelope and helps identify where uncontrolled air leakage may be occurring.

QUICK WIN

On the next windy day, use the back of your hand to find the leakiest exterior door, then set a rolled towel (a “door snake”) against it tonight. Cost: $0.

Home Missions is educational guidance. Never attempt work involving fuel gas, combustion equipment, dangerous electrical conditions, roofs, or hazardous materials.

