



SPRAY FOAM INSULATION: A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

Spray foam is replacing conventional insulation as Americans aim to cut costs and combat the energy crisis.

By Doug Kramer

Aside from soaring gas prices, another major problem devastating our economy is the cost to operate each and every building in America, both commercial and residential. Americans are feeling the impact of the current energy crisis as utility bills soar to record highs. The importance of green building practices, not only in new construction, but also through smart retrofit of existing buildings, is paramount to reducing energy consumption and costs to consumers and businesses alike.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, heating and cooling account for 50 to 70 percent of the total energy used in a typical home. Poor insulation is a major contributor to a majority of wasted energy and money, and as a result, more and more buildings are being built and remodeled using spray foam insulation that not only conserves energy by letting out less air, but is also better for the environment than fiberglass because it allows building owners to consume less fossil fuel. As oil prices continue to rise, builders and owners alike are opting for the most sustainable and energy-efficient materials, one of which is spray foam.

MOVING IN A GREEN DIRECTION

As the green movement gains popularity within all industries, spray foam is quickly becoming the most popular method of insulation for builders and consumers due to its environmental advantages. Spray foam is made in part from natural, agriculturally based products and contains raw materials from renewable resources, making it environmentally friendly.

Americans use twice the amount of energy necessary to run their homes and businesses, accounting for a substantial amount of wasted power. With escalating

energy prices, it should come as no surprise that almost 90 percent of homeowners are opting for energy-efficient features. One of the best options for ongoing energy savings is spray foam insulation. Unlike traditional insulation like fiberglass or cellulose, spray foam insulation can seal and fill all of the tiny cracks and seams between walls. Thus, spray foam offers better insulation and eliminates air infiltration, which accounts for as much as 40 percent of normal energy loss. By reducing energy emissions, consumers will notice an immediate reduction in their utility bills.

Since spray foam eliminates air infiltration, it also helps reduce the level of airborne pollutants, such as dust and allergens, which can aggravate allergy and asthma sufferers. By improving indoor air quality and reducing allergens, spray foam minimizes health concerns.

Spray foam can also offer builders and owners peace of mind due to its performance characteristics in improving indoor air quality through resistance to air infiltration, insulation value, and fire testing. Rigorously tested by third-party testing agencies, spray foam



ABOUT the
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Doug Kramer is CEO and president of LaPolla Industries, a leading manufacturer and supplier of energy-efficient and cost-reducing spray foam insulation. LaPolla is a globally recognized industry leader in spray foam and is generally renowned as the largest spray foam insulation distributor in the world. For more information, please visit www.lapollaindustries.com.

products conform to standards as prescribed by standardized testing methods (American Society of Testing and Materials) to assure the products strictly adhere to performance and safety standards.

EQUIPMENT TRAINING AND EFFICIENCY

So why aren't all contractors using this eco-friendly, health-conscious, energy-efficient, and cost-effective insulation option? There are two main hindrances deterring contractors from utilizing spray foam: equipment costs and lack of confidence due to the technological complexities of insulation.

Successful contractors know that their profits largely depend on job efficiency, which in turn depends upon quality of work. Some insulation companies are beginning to provide contractors with training, so that they can reach the level of confidence necessary to overcome the initial learning curve associated with spray foam insulation. AirTight, a division of LaPolla Industries, specializes in providing the most comprehensive turnkey, start-up, and training programs in the United States. Beyond training, AirTight provides technical support and is dedicated to providing quality products, working solutions, as well as assistance to design professionals, building owners, and contractors.

COST BENEFITS

With a focus on energy conservation, it is critical that contractors obtain the skills and resources necessary to reduce heating, air-conditioning, and electric costs for all Americans through "green" insulation. While the initial cost of foam may be greater than that of conventional fiberglass, the return on the investment can be immediately seen with energy savings. Savings take place with an attractive investment to the building owner in addition to possible tax credits, grants, and subsidies offered by both the federal and state governments. Perhaps most importantly, spray foam insulation provides an instant impact on cost savings to the owner through immediate reductions in energy bills. Plus, a green building typically has a higher resale value, which is an added bonus given the state of the real estate market today.

With the current condition of the U.S. economy and the popularity of the green movement, spray foam is beginning to replace fiberglass insulation in homes and businesses alike, due to its green attributes as well as its long-term benefits that save on energy costs and boost resale values. By building with spray foam, contractors and building owners are making a contribution to the green revolution that can be passed on to all future landlords, reducing our carbon footprint and beginning a nationwide energy conservation program that can save the United States billions of dollars. ♦



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