

Energy Tip of the Month. January 2012.

If you have a pull-down attic stairway all that stands between you and the great outdoors is a relatively thin piece of plywood. You can save money and draftiness by putting an insulated hatch above the stairway in the attic. It will reduce the amount of heat and moisture leaking into your attic, the severity of ice dams and attic mold! This is an easy job for any handyman or do-it-yourselfer. Or you can buy a kit for a little over \$100.

According to Michael Whelan, Town resident and principal of Live Green LLC, it is possible to reduce air leakage and improve insulation by installing a reflective or insulated seal above the stairway. One of the most important considerations is sealing the air leaks along the margins where the hatch cover meets the floor or hatch. This can be done with weatherstripping or caulk. Not every pull down attic hatch can be insulated. You need a pull down stairway that folds back onto itself and fits within the perimeter of the hatch. If you have one of the other old fashioned types, you may want to consider getting the newer fold-up type and having the insulated hatch insulated at the same time.

Here is a ready-made product that appears to provide good insulation for the attic drop down stairs hatch:

<http://www.batticdoor.com/StairCover.htm>

Here's an uninsulated type:

<http://store.contractor-pro.com/attic-tents-attic-stair-covers-c-47.html>

Don't forget the air sealing around the edges!

Here is an insulated hatch cover you can construct yourself or ask a handyman to make.

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/insulation_airsealing/index.cfm/mytopic=11410

Here's information for do it yourselfers about how to insulate a hatch without stairs.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISLIbuR5WqU>