

Maximize Your Home's Efficiency: Measure Your Insulation

If your home's HVAC system is running more often than usual but temperatures are still uncomfortable in your home, you may want to measure your attic insulation.

The attic acts as an additional buffer between outdoor temperatures and the living space in your home. Without proper insulation, your HVAC system may have to work harder to keep the temperatures inside comfortable.

You can inspect your attic's insulation if you are concerned that it is not effectively keeping your home's temperature regulated. If you have fiberglass (pink fluffy material), mineral wool (white or gray fluffy material) or loose fill insulation (small pieces), a do-it-yourself inspection is relatively easy.

If you live in an older home and are not sure if the insulation contains asbestos, do not attempt to measure your insulation. Leave this area alone and call a professional to have the insulation properly tested and removed.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ADDING INSULATION?

In addition to lower bills each month, Louisiana homeowners can experience many benefits from making energy efficient upgrades and improvements to their homes.

- Some energy companies offer rebates to customers who make energy efficient improvements, such as additional insulation.
- Financing programs or financial institutions may offer assistance to homeowners to cover the full or partial cost of upgrades.
- Federal tax credits are available to homeowners and will allow up to \$3,200 through 2032 to homeowners who choose to add energy efficient upgrades.

INSPECTING YOUR ATTIC'S INSULATION

Once you are in your attic, you will see joists with insulation in between them. Use caution when moving around your attic and make sure you walk on the joists.

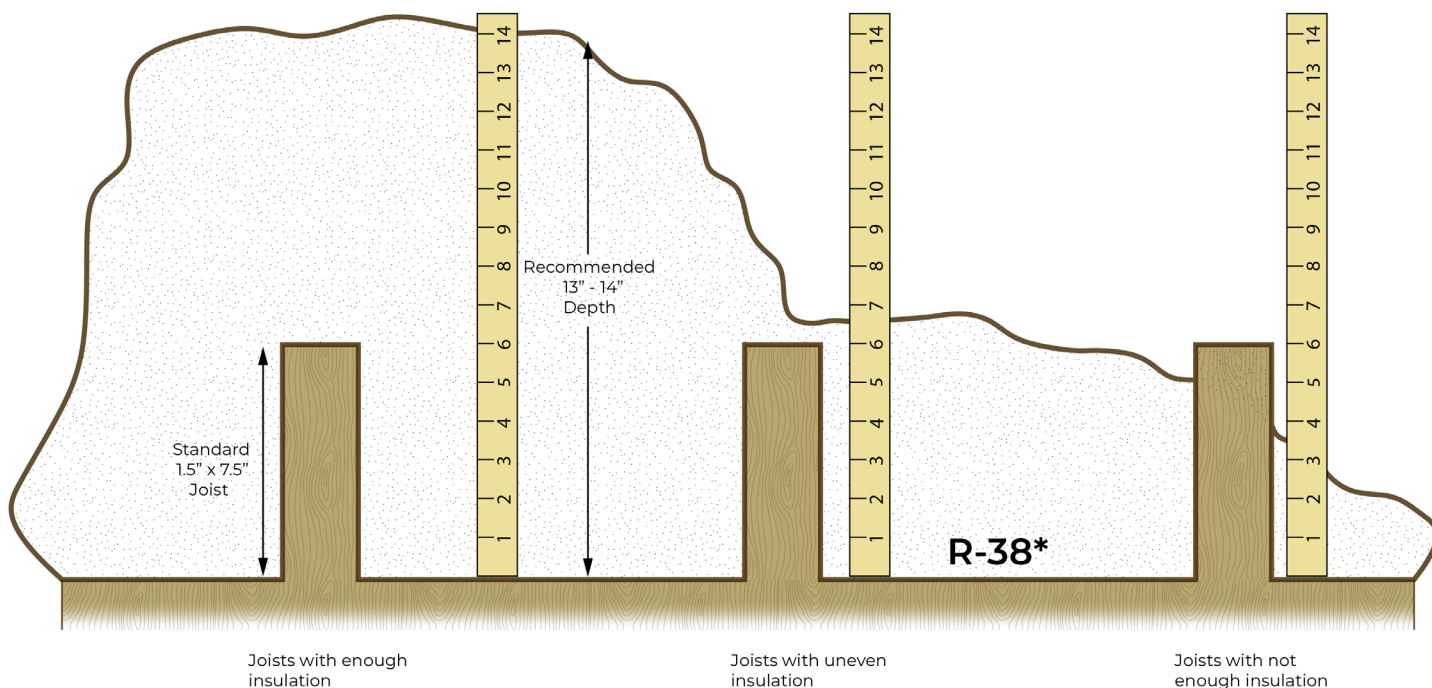
Things to look for:

- If you can see the joists between the insulation, it's very likely that you do not have enough insulation.
- Stick a ruler or tape measure into the insulation to measure how thick the layer is. This is also a good time to photograph the length to show a contractor.
- Sometimes there will be sufficient insulation in some areas but not others. Measure the height of your insulation in a few different places to make sure all areas are getting approximately the same coverage.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, it is recommended to have 10 to 14 inches of insulation in your attic in Louisiana's climate. If your current insulation is less than this, consider hiring a contractor to add more. In many cases, you can layer new insulation on top of the existing one, even if it's a different type. However, be sure not to place heavier insulation on top of lighter materials, as this can compress the insulation and reduce its effectiveness.

This project is possible to do on your own, but a professional can recommend the best insulation option based on your home's needs and your budget. A professional will also be more aware of common hazards in the attic and know how to safely move throughout the space.

RECOMMENDED INSULATION LEVELS FOR MOST SOUTHERN CLIMATES



*Recommended Dept. of Energy attic insulation levels for commonly used fiberglass, mineral wool, and cellulose insulation assuming about R-3 per inch

TIPS FOR HIRING A PROFESSIONAL

Like any contractor, you can obtain multiple quotes before hiring someone to do the work in your attic. When you contact contractors, it's a good idea to have the following information ready:

- The square footage of your attic.
- The depth of current insulation and what type it is.
- If you have photographs of the measurements, pass these along to the contractors.

Be sure to check the state's contracting board website before signing a contract with anyone to make sure they are licensed and insured to do the work.



LaHouse
Research & Education Center