

What Can Installation Crews Do Besides Install?

By George Porter

It is probably safe to say that installation crews don't spend every hour of every day feverishly installing homes these days. Good crews will always find work but wouldn't it be good to have a few ideas for some "fill-in" jobs, unless of course you don't need a little extra income.

So here are some ideas that some installers have done to sort of fill up their schedule. Some of these could be a whole career by themselves.

1. **Repair ductwork**

Many homes, not just older homes have leaking duct work where it has come loose or some critter has interacted with it. This can lead to serious problems for the home as has been pointed out by past articles in the Journal. All you do is go under the home and check for loose connections or damaged crossover ducts. When you find them you fix them. I was recently under a home that had poor heating and cooling to the tag unit. The duct was tight and it had no holes. The problem came from improper installation in the first place. The flex duct was strapped to the belly of the home and every strap had squeezed the hose to nearly one third of its original diameter. It had very little air flow. You loosen the straps and put a support (two pieces of vinyl siding) for the duct between them so the hose returned to its original shape and the air came pouring into the room. All you have to do is understand that these homes are designed to function well and if they don't, then something is wrong.

2. **Upgrade ductwork**

Many older homes would benefit from new flex duct of a higher R value. Most older homes are using a R-4 insulated piece of duct as a crossover. R-4 meets the code but you can do better, in fact much better. You can simply replace the whole piece with R-8 or you could actually fabricate metal duct and cover it with R-11. You can also do combinations of insulated metal elbows and drops with a straight R-11 hose to connect. The new in-floor crossover ducts are easy to mess up when an installation crew is "under the gun" to complete a job because of weather or some other stress inducing situation. If a part of the marriage wall feels hot when the heat is on and cold when the air is running then you might have a leak and that is a problem. These repairs are usually difficult and if they are not done with the proper materials they could cause more harm than good. One of the most common problems is a sort of blow by where the ducts meet at the marriage sill. The gasket is in place but the duct in the floor is not tight to the opening and the air runs in around the duct into the belly cavity. You have to tear open the belly and the duct and seal it up with very good mastic and belly board repair material.

3. **Upgrade anchor systems**

There are many new types of anchor systems that simply didn't exist only a few years ago and many home owners might like to have these new systems installed on there present

home. I can guarantee you that virtually nobody is knocking on doors trying to sell new systems to replace old ones and the market is absolutely enormous. It is basically any home you can find over 10 years old but don't let that necessarily be your guide. Lots of folks like new ideas so let them be the judge.

4. Replace Shingle roofs

The shingles on our roofs wear out just like the shingles on any roof. 15 or 20 years and it is usually time to reshingle. Most manufacturers allow one over-shingle (second layer of shingles) but no manufacturer allows three layers of shingles on the same roof (it would look pretty ugly anyway). You do the job just like you did the top rows when you put the home together. You already have the tools so why not develop a sideline.

In a very few states you need a special license to do this kind of work but in the vast majority of the country you use whatever you have now for a license. Also check with your insurance just in case but you will probably be fine. Now go make some extra bucks.