

Realtors who know retrofits add value.

What is a home energy retrofit?

An energy retrofit is the process of improving the energy efficiency of all components of a home:

- ✓ Building Envelope
- ✓ Heating & Cooling
- ✓ Appliances
- ✓ Smart Home Controls

What are the benefits?

Energy retrofits offer your clients a great opportunity to:

- ✓ Improve the comfort and energy efficiency of their home
- ✓ Potentially reduce the costs associated with running the home
- ✓ Have a quieter home
- ✓ Heat and cool their home easily
- ✓ Enjoy cleaner air

As we move towards net-zero, the energy efficiency of the home will become more important to buyers making energy efficient homes easier to sell.

Why talk to your clients about this now?

Federal, provincial, and in some cases municipal financing and rebate opportunities are widely available, so it's highly beneficial to do the work now. Plus, retrofitted homes are not only more comfortable and climate-friendly, they are also more valuable.

How can you advise clients about retrofits?

Share the retrofit process (below). When followed, this proven process results in the greatest benefits and also ensures that the maximum grant funding can be accessed.

Homeowners will have different levels of understanding relating to energy efficiency so it's important to use relatable language and avoid jargon if you can.

The energy retrofit process

STEP 1: GET AN ENERGY EVALUATION BY A REGISTERED ENERGY ADVISOR (EA)

EAs help people understand their home energy usage. They are knowledgeable professionals trained to help homeowners, renovators, and builders to view the house as a system and enhance its energy efficiency.

Registered by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), EAs deliver the EnerGuide Rating System (ERS) and use diagnostic and modeling tools to provide impartial, third-party verification and rating of a home's energy efficiency.

They'll provide a detailed Renovation Upgrade Report that identifies areas that require attention and can explore additional opportunities with homeowners to create a roadmap towards a healthier, more sustainable and efficient home.

Your clients can find an experienced EA here: betterhomesbc.ca

Remember, some funding opportunities may require a registered Energy Advisor to be involved in the project. This is an important step for your client.

STEP 2: FOCUS ON THE BUILDING ENVELOPE FIRST

The Renovation Upgrade Report will outline a range of recommendations to improve the integrity of the home. Start with the recommendations to the building envelope first—things like insulation, air sealing, and windows and doors.

Connect your clients with contractors that have experience in retrofits and are registered with the Home Performance Stakeholder Council to ensure they're able to take advantage of CleanBC funding.

Your clients can find registered contractors here: homeperformance.ca/find-a-contractor

Encourage your clients to discuss requirements with a number of contractors to review their experience with retrofits and discuss their recommendations in conjunction with the report.

STEP 3: INVEST IN A HEAT PUMP

Heat pumps are a well-established, extremely efficient way to heat and cool a home while also reducing greenhouse gas pollution. The key feature of heat pumps is they capture and move warm air rather than create it by burning fuel (like gas furnaces). In winter, even when it's cold, heat pumps capture heat from outside air and move it to the inside of your home. At the same time, they are removing cool air from inside and pushing it outside. This whole system works in reverse during warmer months to provide air conditioning.

It's important that a selected contractor knows how to incorporate recommendations from the Renovation Upgrade Report, and then designs and installs a system that meets the specific needs of the home while following best practices. Placement, sizing, aesthetics, budget, noise, and supplementary heating (in cold climates) are all considerations that a contractor should raise and discuss with your client.

STEP 4: IMPROVE THE HOME'S TECHNOLOGY

Taking the home on a journey towards being fully powered by electricity is the way to eliminate fossil fuels.

Replacing a gas stove with an electric induction unit might be the last step on this journey. Cooking is easier and far more efficient with 90% of energy channeled to the pan resulting in a 70% reduction in energy consumption. Induction stoves are also really easy to clean and make the home safer by eliminating methane gas.

Discuss the benefits of smart thermostats and other technologies to reduce energy usage while allowing a more comfortable and healthy living environment.

New technology allows for greater control over home energy usage by setting more specific parameters around the way a home operates in terms of heating, cooling and energy usage. Upgrading to LED lights is another little (yet important!) step.

