

Suggestions for making your James-Kilmer home warmer, more comfortable and saving money at the same time

If you would like to be warmer, more comfortable and reduce your electricity bill at the same time this winter, you may wish to consider doing the following:

Insulate your balcony doors and pull-open windows

Drafts from around your balcony door and around your pull-open windows are a major source of cold air during winter months, reducing the comfort level in your unit. Because of drafts you will tend to run your heating unit fan on a higher setting for a longer time, increasing your electric bill. This problem can be substantially reduced by placing "rope caulk" around the periphery of the balcony sliding door opening to stop the flow of cold air from outside. Take special care to block all openings, especially those at the right and left of the top of the door and the space beneath the door. The rope caulk can be easily installed in only a few minutes. The disadvantage is that the door cannot be opened while the caulk is in place; however, the caulk can easily be removed and reused in the future.

The insulation around many pull-open windows has worn away, permitting cold air to seep in. This problem can be solved easily by installing self-adhesive open cell weather-stripping (3/8" thick, 1/2" wide) along the "lip" of the open window frame so that it meets the surrounding stable frame when the window is closed. It is important to get the *open foam* type of weather-stripping as it compresses easily and allows the windows to close tightly.

It is also important to first thoroughly clean the surfaces to which the rope caulk and the weather-stripping will be applied. Both products are inexpensive and available at local hardware stores.

These two improvements are quick, easy and inexpensive to do. They will make a noticeable improvement in your comfort and can reduce your energy cost as well.

Install insulation in your window wells

The window wells (the space under your window sills between the outside of the building and the inside of your unit) are empty. This allows cold air to chill the inside wall of the sill. You can improve the comfort level of your unit and reduce your electricity cost by installing insulation in these empty spaces. This, however, involves more work than caulking the balcony doors and weather-stripping the pull-open windows. Insulating your window wells will make your apartment more comfortable in the summer as well as winter. You may wish to engage a contractor to do the work for you, or you may choose to do it yourself. If you decide to do it yourself, here is a description of what is involved.

The tops of the window sills are metal and are attached to the base by screws (usually 2 or 3) that are under the front edge of the sills. Remove these

screws by first using a utility knife to remove the multiple layers of paint that usually cover the screws. Then unscrew them with a screwdriver.

Use a utility knife to cut through the paint and/or caulk at the sides and possibly the back of the sill top to free it for removal. The sill top is removed by pulling it forward and slightly upward. The back of the sill fits under the $\frac{3}{4}$ " band of metal that is part of the window. The sill top slides forward (toward the inside of your apartment) rather than lifting up.

With the top of the sill removed, place 4 to 6 mil (thickness) plastic sheeting in the window well in the form of a U to serve as a vapor barrier and to enclose the fiberglass insulation. Cut the plastic sheeting so that about 6" of extra sheeting extends above the window sill in the front and back to be folded over the fiberglass when it has been inserted. In the sills next to the heating/air conditioning units (HVAC units), place an extra layer of fiberglass between the outside wall and the pipes in the window well that go to the HVAC units. This provides extra insulation for the pipes. The pipes are already enclosed in a sleeve of insulation.

Insert fiberglass insulation to fill the U-shaped vapor barrier sleeves from bottom to top and side to side. Then fold over the extra sheeting at the front and back to cover the fiberglass.

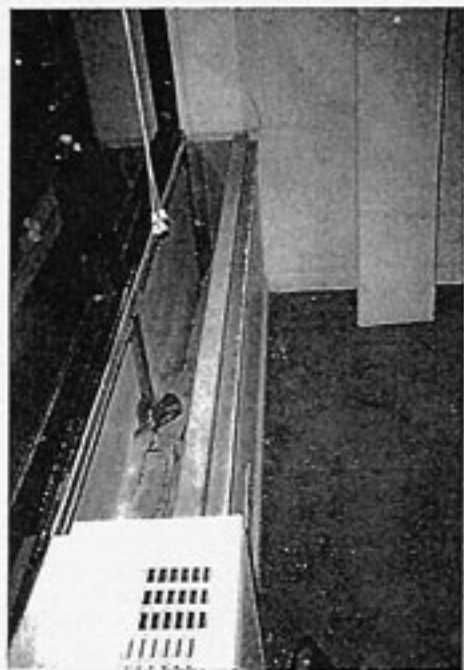
Reinstall the sill top, recaulk the side by the wall, and retouch the paint if necessary. You should be prepared to touch up the paint on the wall and on the top of the sill as both may be damaged or soiled in the process.

Owens Corning Miraflex fiber insulation is available at Home Depot. Plastic sheeting (4 to 6 mil thick) is available at local hardware stores and at Home Depot.

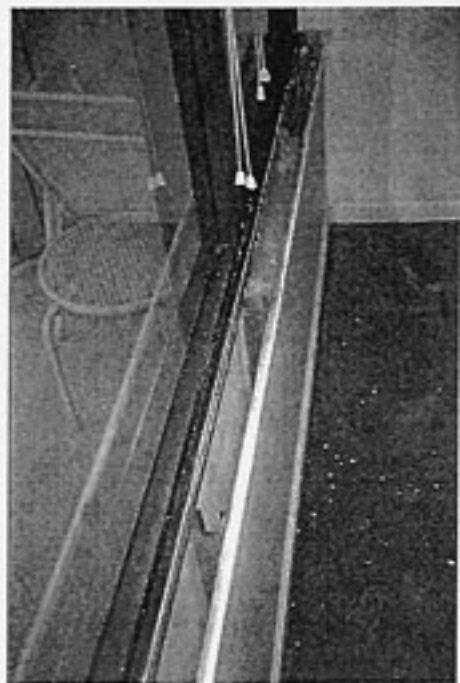
Technical instructions are courtesy of Conrad Roland of the JK maintenance staff.

Pictures of the process are on the following page.

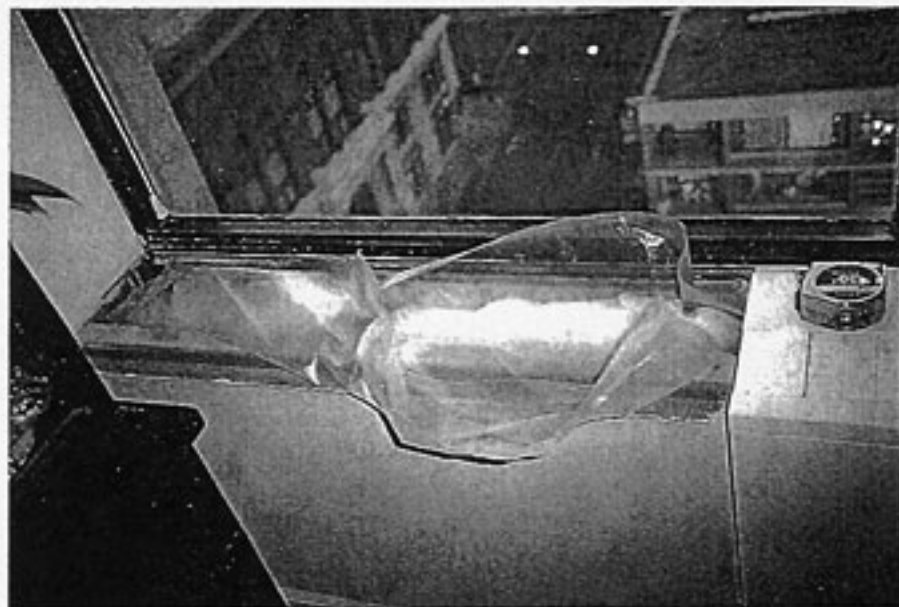
These suggestions were prepared by a unit owner who is implementing them in his unit. We hope this will help you make your home more comfortable and reduce your electricity bills. It will also help the association reduce its energy cost.



Inside window well before installing plastic vapor barrier and fiberglass



Window well by balcony with vapor barrier and insulation installed in right hand section



Window well with vapor barrier and fiberglass inserted prior to folding over the plastic sheeting and reinstalling the metal sill top.