



**Ken  
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*Owner of Slate  
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## It's About Time

A true craftsman will settle for nothing less than perfection and that is admirable. But sometimes near-perfection is adequate for the job at hand. It is up to the person doing the job to decide how close to perfection they should go. Time is the main ingredient in perfection and time is money. Homeowners want to know what something is going to cost before they agree to have it done. And contractors want to know that they will get paid for a job when it is finished.

Noticeable imperfections are not acceptable. For a cabinetmaker, any visible defect will probably be called out. For a boat builder, any leaks will surely not be acceptable. A painter's work will be criticized if it looks bad. My industry works with air. Can you see where I'm going with this? Imperfections in a duct system will never be seen or noticed by a homeowner and rarely are they detected by code officials. That is why a new test is being required by the building code for homes being built. It detects air leaks in the duct system and if those leaks exceed 5% of the total airflow, it will need to be repaired. This is a good step forward to catch all the sloppy work that is routinely found in a new home. It won't affect the craftsmen because they would never build a leaky duct system in the first place. It will be interesting to see how the inferior contractors choose to step up their game. The department of energy estimates that 25-40% of all air in a duct system is typically leaked in or out. That equates to nearly half of someone's energy bill. That was never acceptable even when electricity was inexpensive. But today, that's a crime. In some parts of the country they don't install systems in an attic. Around these parts, it's a common thing. An attic is a hostile place to work in the summer and if the system is up there, it resides in an environment that is completely contrary to its job. An air conditioning system attempting to produce 55° air and deliver it to the living space is comparable to hand delivering an ice cube to someone a mile away. There isn't much left by the time it reaches its destination. Airtight and well insulated ducts would revolutionize this industry. Even though it has been assumed all along that you were getting these things from every contractor, you were not. Those who hired craftsmen have been getting leak-free systems forever along with near-perfection and have been enjoying the benefits. It's time that everyone else gets it too.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

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