



**HEAT RECOVERY VENTILATION SYSTEMS**

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## **Is The HRV Industry in Crisis?**

From going to seminars and talking to various people both in Ireland and the UK, it would appear that any alternative to Mechanical Ventilation in a residential application should be warmly welcomed. Why is this? It is a little bit like the situation where everyone gets to hear about the tragic events of people dying of cancer long before they should, but nobody taking any notice of the fact that people are living longer active lives now more than at any time in recorded history.

Like cancer, much research has yet to be done on low energy construction processes and a certain culture change has yet to occur before we can progress. Thirty years ago insulation was virtually unheard of and double glazing salesmen had a worse reputation than second-hand car salesmen. Nowadays, after billions being invested by the likes of St Gobain, insulation is becoming an accepted norm. Even treble-glazing is well understood and accepted. Of course, just when things were coming right we had to throw in confusing terms such as air-tightness (another word for draught proofing) and cold bridge calculations, when these are really just part of the process of getting the insulation envelope properly planned, specified and installed in such a way that it will perform as it can.

We now accept that good quality windows and good insulation are something of a no-brainer with regard to modern building. But common sense should also tell us that this kind of building needs one other component in order that the building and its occupants can have a good chance of a happy healthy relationship for the best part of a century. This is a mechanical ventilation system using heat recovery.

Like insulation, this is not a difficult concept. It uses a couple of fans and a recovery core to exchange the heat from the exhaust air to the fresh air, but as the insulation companies have found out, some pain and patience must be endured by the manufacturers before the system becomes a standard piece of kit in a house and only then will they reap the return on their investment. All the major manufacturers of fans have now accepted that the days of simply sticking in a fan are now over and they have almost all, especially in Europe, have moved to producing heat recovery ventilation units.

But this is only part of the story, what happens when these boxes hit the distribution (sales) networks. Traditionally, these networks for residential fans were electrical wholesalers, where some limited advice was available to installers, but even worse, these boxes are appearing in builders providers and "the lad that knows all about that left last Friday". Worse still, you can buy your system online and 'is so easy to fit it yourself.'

Of course it is not rocket science, but at the same time, certain rules need to be understood and principles need to be followed to ensure that it will work well. These are such things like



using appropriate ducting systems in which the air moves smoothly and silently from A to B with the least pressure exerted on the fans so that they can stay working efficiently for decades.

There are many horror stories out there and like the sad cancer situations, they are the ones that are talked about. But there are thousands of examples of systems out there working silently and efficiently in the background and complementing the insulation and draught-proofing of modern comfortable houses.

For the detail on how to achieve this utopia, ProAir Systems are running a one day course on HRV at the Maldron Hotel, Oranmore, Co. Galway on Friday the 18th of July.

