

Exercise: Dump the Jargon

The Scenario: You've completed an audit and are relaying findings to a homeowner:

"The blower door reading says 2,167 cfm50, and with that level of infiltration, you have an ACH50 of 13.2. An analysis of your attic shows that you have a nominal R-11 installed at a level 2, and thus you are at a derated level that is only 23.4% of the ORNL guidelines for homes in this zone. With the CAZ at -5.0 pascals, I'm also concerned that moving toward ASHRAE 62.2, based on the ANOVA I've run, your pathogen levels risk combobulating the whatsit. If you sign this contract and the indicated addendums, we can initiate remediation."

Huh?

Silliness aside, big-sounding words and industry jargon might work fine among colleagues or in a technical training, but without homeowner understanding or confidence, that generally doesn't lead to signed contracts.

It's important to translate your technical knowledge and findings into language that the typical homeowner *can* understand. [Sure, when dealing with the engineer, dip into the technical jargon bag if it helps—but don't let that be your default approach.]

Examples:

<u>Jargon to Avoid</u>	<u>Alternative Way to Describe</u>
ACH50	How many times the air in your home gets replaced by air from outside
ASHRAE 62.2	Building codes, recommended ventilation levels
Blower door	A large fan that we set in your doorway to help find air leaks and measure the overall leakiness of the house
Exfiltration / Infiltration	The air leaking out of / leaking into your home
HVAC	Furnace, air-conditioner, boiler
ICEE	Building code, current building code
Sill plate	The place where your wood-framed wall sits on top of your foundation
Utility Bill Disaggregation	Analyzing your utility bill to separate out how much you use to heat and cool your home, heat your water, and other uses

List some of the jargon from our industry that gets used with homeowners, and then come up with an alternative way to convey the meaning that is more easily understood by someone who isn't an industry expert.

<u>Jargon to Avoid</u>	<u>Alternative Way to Describe Concept</u>