

Valley Voice

OK Valley Home Inspections Where It's All About Knowledge and Experience

A Newsletter for **REALTORS, MORTGAGE LENDERS, HOMEOWNERS** (and other inspectors)

Every now and then, something happens in the course of a home inspection when we say... **"What were the owners thinking"**. I've found a few things recently that made me scratch my head. Following are some examples of things that can break a perfectly good inspection, or slow down the whole selling process for a while.

HOSE BIBS CAN FREEZE, HAVE MISSING HANDLES OR ARE LOOSE OR LEAKING

Outside hose bibs come in two styles... frost protected and those that are going to freeze and flood your basement. The popular option is a "frost protected" hose bib, designed so water will not freeze and damage pipes. **NOTE:** These will not drain or work properly if a hose is left connected. Non-frost protected pipes must be shut off and drained before winter freeze-up or they could freeze, usually spraying water inside the home. While checking hose bibs, make sure they have a working handle and ensure they are not dripping water inside or outside. It is also important to check the caulking around the pipe where it exits the house... this is where mice, ants and stinkbugs can enter. While you have the caulk gun in your hand, use it on all other wall openings. Use caution when turning on hoses for the first time each spring and check for leaks that might have happened over winter!

CARPETING ON DECKS AND STEPS

Decks are designed for outdoor use and usually get wet. Normally, when wood gets wet, it dries quickly and little damage is done. Fences are a good example of this. However, when decks and steps get wet, and **carpets, leaves or dirt** hold the water against the wood for an extended period, moisture damage will occur. If your deck does not have spaces between flooring members, water will get trapped on the surface. It's best to remove all carpeting

material and install a waterproof membrane. If carpet is desired, use a removable carpet.

INSTALL COVER PLATES ON ALL OUTLETS OR ANYWHERE WIRES ARE CONNECTED

In a properly installed electrical system, wiring and junctions are protected from mechanical damage, tampering, electrical shock and fire. Splices must be contained in electrical panels or junction boxes located in walls, ceilings or in attics. To protect the homeowner from shocks and to contain fires, a cover plate or other protection must be properly installed. Covers should be screwed to securely attached boxes - this includes: wall switch plates, junction boxes, light fixtures, wall receptacle outlets, dryer outlets, etc. **NOTE:** outlet boxes must be readily accessible at all times and cannot be permanently covered by ceiling or wall coverings.

DAMAGED, REMOVED, RE-LOCATED OR CUT STRUCTURAL JOISTS AND BEAMS

Structural members in basements, walls and ceilings adhere to very specific design and code requirements. Contractors are required to build according to local codes and minimum standards that existed at the time. This is why a "permit" was required when the home was built.

Inspectors find problems in areas where inexperienced homeowners, handymen or other professions where HVAC, plumbing or electrical upgrades have modified. We find ceiling joists cut in half or damaged and wall support members removed or severely weakened. Other notable concerns found include: oversized utility notches in ceiling joists, supporting wall studs removed so heating plenums could be installed, joists removed so toilet drains could be installed and wall supports modified for electrical outlets. Inspectors might not see all these areas of concern, but he will mention the ones he finds...usually with a big **X**

TIGHTEN TAPS AND FIX ALL LEAKS

How often do homeowners turn off a faucet and find that they have to "tighten it again", it just keeps dripping!. This is usually a sign of a damaged "O" ring which can easily be replaced by the homeowner. Leaky taps not only waste water but could increase energy bills if it is the hot water that leaks. Dripping water also stains tubs, toilets and sinks. Leaks inside cupboards or behind toilets and washing machines are a concern as water can do major damage to both the cupboard and the floor or framing. If they leak for extended periods of time, damage can be extremely serious, requiring repairs to floors, walls and ceilings.

Sometimes, structural members can also be damaged, adding significantly to repair costs. Mould is a viable concern when water leaks into floor and wall cavities.

Check all taps, valves, drains and connections prior to listing to ensure leaks are not evident.

WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW WHEN PURCHASING OR SELLING A MOBILE HOME!

This Directive is being issued by a provincial safety manager pursuant to section 30 of the Safety Standards Act. Stakeholders should consult with local authorities having jurisdiction prior to undertaking work, to determine local requirements.

Date of Issue: June 6, 2008

The following Directive provides guidance on the interpretation and application of Section 21 of the Electrical Safety Regulations.

General

Under the BC Electrical Code, electrical installations are usually fixed installations field-built under BC Electrical Code Part I, or factory-built equipment under CEC Part II and bearing an approval mark from an accredited certification agency. Electrical Safety Regulation 21 requires all new equipment (such as manufactured homes) to display an approval mark prior to sale, and ESR 21(d) requires **used manufactured homes, to display a label provided by the appropriate provincial safety manager (aka "Silver Label").**

Note:

- Any certification or approval label provided for mobile homes, recreational vehicles, or factory built structures only applies to the unit itself and does not cover any consumer plug-in equipment or any necessary permits required to provide power to the unit at an installation site.
- Used structures that have had the electrical installation removed or rendered permanently inoperable, are not subject to inspection or labelling under this program.

New Mobile Homes

1. New mobile homes must conform to CSA testing and certification standards and are required to show evidence of conforming to the applicable standard.
2. When a new mobile home is missing the approval mark, the owner or vendor of that unit must apply to the certification agency for special acceptance and labelling.

Used Mobile Homes

3. Used mobile homes (whether de-registered or not) **MAY ONLY BE OFFERED FOR SALE** in British Columbia without re-inspection provided (1) that they bear an approval mark and (2) that the wiring has **NOT BEEN ALTERED**. (Modifications) **done under permit** does not invalidate the original label. When the electrical wiring has been altered **without a permit**, the mobile home must be inspected and a new approval label applied.
4. Alternate documentation, indicating that the unit was originally approved, cannot be accepted in place of an approval label. However, if original documentation exists, and there have been **no UNPERMITTED modifications** to the unit, then an approval label may be applied by a Safety Officer.
5. For BCSA approval a licensed electrical contractor must:
 - Obtain an installation permit;
 - Complete FRM-1143 Used Mobile Home Inspection Report form. Submit this form if requested by a Safety Officer;
 - Check any additional wiring added without permit, and check any structural additions added to the manufactured home for additional wiring. These additional checks are to be noted on the declaration form;
 - Complete any repairs required and note on the declaration form;
 - Submit an FRM-0206 Electrical Contractor Authorization and Declaration Form confirming that the installation complies with this directive, and add any notes required by this directive; and
6. Upon acceptance, the BC Safety Authority label will be applied to the electrical panel cover.

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