

OK Valley Home Inspections *Where It's All About Knowledge*

Valley Voice

A newsletter for **REALTORS, MORTGAGE LENDERS, HOMEOWNERS** - Deal Closing 101

I've talked at length about adding a "pre-listing home inspection" as part of the initial listing dialogue. This should be up there with "de-cluttering", "curb appeal" and "home staging". We've all seen deals fall through, after the buyers' inspection discovers a number of minor or major concerns.

Agents, mortgagers, buyers and sellers cannot afford to lose a sale due to a poor showing at a buyers' inspection. OK Valley Home Inspections continues our list of concerns that should be fixed before the final inspection begins.

FIREWOOD OR OTHER WOOD MATERIALS STORED AGAINST OR INSIDE THE HOME

How many of us own wood-burning fireplaces? If so, then there is a chance that we'll bring firewood into our homes (or lean it against the house out of the rain). The major concern with firewood is the issue of **excess moisture** and **pests** - including mice, earwigs, termites and ants. Don't store or bring firewood in your home unless you plan on burning it right away. Firewood (and construction wood) leaning against your home or drying out in the basement is never a good idea!

OVERSPANNING OF JOISTS AND BEAMS - DISTANCE TOO BIG FOR THE JOIST SIZE

When homes are originally built, there is a minimum size of beams and joists that are recommended. This is based primarily on the unsupported distance between major supports, the type of joist or beam and the weight that the members are designed to support (the species of wood can also come into play). Standards for residential construction can vary depending on the design load, the year it was built and type of building. Coupled with this is the fact that many floor joists or beams have been covered with drywall or other barriers. OMG! How can we tell if it is OK or built to proper specifications?

In most cases, structural design cannot be confirmed during a typical home inspection - and certainly not without referencing a book of building codes and design specifications. When we notice a significant deflection in the floors, wall cracks or other physical deformities, we'll try to determine the cause. This is why it is so important to get building permits when remodeling... the local municipality **will always ask** the builder or contractor to confirm span lengths, weight loads, type of material, etc. FYI... originally, most homes are built properly... it's **modifications, additions** or **decks** that have the biggest structural concerns!

INSUFFICIENT, DISTURBED OR FLATTENED ATTIC INSULATION

Whenever possible, your home inspector will lift up the attic hatch or crawl into a opening somewhere leading to the attic. We look for many things in an attic as this is an area where few homeowners dare to venture. We check for water leaks, piping and venting, chimneys, faulty electrical and other improper installations. Another area we look at is insulation. Standards have changed since the first contemporary homes were built and we often notice that there is only a thin layer (2 to 4 inches) of batt insulation, wood chips or vermiculite™ keeping out the heat or cold. Modern homes have insulation values up to R50, with insulation depths of 12 to 15 inches. Often, we find that a homeowner has used the attic as a storage vault and has flattened the insulation with boxes or suitcases. They may have trampled the insulation while installing fans, lights or wiring. Unfortunately, flat insulation does not work as it was designed... there has to be air pockets to trap and prevent the transfer of heat or cold air. Sometimes, workers have simply pushed the insulation aside and have not re-distributed it properly. If inspectors see a lack of insulation, or insulation in poor condition, we report it. Fix it by fluffing it back up, adding more insulation, or spreading it out evenly.

PILOT LIGHTS FOR FIREPLACES SHOULD BE TURNED ON BEFORE AN INSPECTION

According to CAHPI Standards of Practice, Home inspectors are not required to light pilot lights on furnaces, water heaters or fireplaces. WHY? We are not always sure why gas valves were shut OFF and turning them ON may lead to VERY serious consequences. When listing a home, ensure that the pilots are lit... even in summer.

SELF-CLOSERS REQ'D ON DOORS TO A GARAGE, CHECK WEATHERSTRIPPING

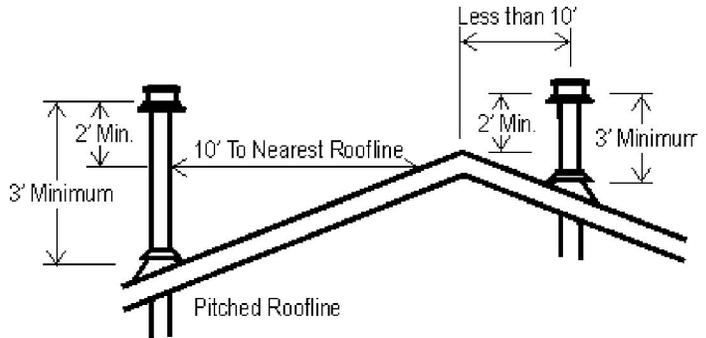
Homes with attached garages must have a self-closing fire-resistant door between the garage and the living quarters. And when it closes, it should close tight. If this is not the case, correct it by making sure the door is fire resistant and there is a self-closing spring or pneumatic closer that tightly closes the door. As a bonus, having tight closing door with good weatherstripping and insulation will also prevent heat from leaving the home.

REPLACE MANUAL HEAT CONTROLLERS WITH A NEW DIGITAL THERMOSTAT

Although this is not necessarily a concern when listing your home, it is a option that many buyers may look for. We all know that a properly adjusted, programmable digital thermostat, can save a significant amount on utility costs, including summer air-conditioning and winter heating. They'll pay for themselves quite quickly.

CHIMNEYS MUST BE THE PROPER HEIGHT FOR PROPER VENTING

To work properly, chimneys must follow specific height specifications when leaving a building through a roof. See below for dimensions. It should be noted that there is also a maximum "length" of chimney allowed - that depends on the type of fuel type, size of chimney opening and type of heat source.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF "A HOME INSPECTOR"

BC Government Rejects ALL American Home Inspection Associations

Standards of Practice and training skills of every American association (including those that are simply American Chapters operating in Canada) were considered to be less than acceptable by the BC government.

On January 28, Solicitor-General John van Dongen announced that by March 31, **EVERYONE performing home inspectors** in B.C. must meet the required qualifications of either CAHPI (BC), the National Certification Program, or the BC Association of Applied Science Technologists.

Inspectors from American groups will now have to re-qualify to become members of one of the three Canadian Associations, meeting our higher entrance

requirements including peer evaluations.

The Canadian associations require that their members carry Errors and Omissions and General Liability Insurance, and now **all home inspectors will have to do the same**. Qualified inspectors will also need a criminal record check and have a BC Inspectors' License. Many will also carry Workers' Compensation coverage and have a business license for the local community.

This is the 7th newsletter in this series.

Having an inspection before listing may uncover problems that may not have been noticed by either the current homeowner or by their agent. Really, who (besides an inspector) actually goes into the crawlspace or climbs on a roof and looks down a chimney?

Having the inspection report available at a "showing" also gives sellers and listers the opportunity to show the positive conditions of the home, as well as the improvements recently made.

If you've missed any newsletters in this series, please go to my webpage and download all the issues in a pdf format.

See

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serving the

Okanagan and Nicola Valleys



KIETH R. SUTFIN, RHI

Cell: (250) 317-3349

Toll Free: 1-888-575-7784

