

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

Valley Voice

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

Home staging, curb appeal, painting and de-cluttering, all contribute to the successful sale of a home. But what happens to the “deal” when an buyer learns about undetected problems just before closing? You can improve the chances of keeping the deal alive by booking a “pre-listing inspection” performed by a provincially licensed Inspector.

We are pleased to publish the ninth in this series of newsletters, discussing concerns that **should** be addressed **before** the purchasers’ Inspection.

TIGHTEN BOLTS THAT FASTEN TOILETS TO THE FLOOR & TANKS TO THE TOILET

One of the more glamorous jobs inspectors do is to make sure toilets are not damaged, are not leaking or won’t leak. The first thing we do is jiggle the toilet to see if it is secure on the floor. Then we jiggle the tank. If either are loose, there is an increased chance of water escaping and damaging the subfloor. Give yours a shake and carefully tighten the necessary bolts. If anchoring bolts cannot be tightened, there may already be damage to the flooring.

ENSURE GARAGE DOOR SAFETY DEVICES ARE WORKING PROPERLY

Overhead garage doors are examined by inspectors, mostly with an eye towards safety. The door should automatically **stop** and **reverse** if it were to strike a car or a kid. There is a sensor adjustment on the motor housing of most openers that you can adjust yourself. We normally position our hand or arm under a closing garage door and observe how much pressure is required for the door to “stop” and “auto-reverse” itself. A second test is conducted with the “electric-eye sensor”. It too, should stop the door immediately and reverse direction if tripped. If this doesn’t happen, quickly and automatically, it’s time to adjust the sensor control or seek professional help.

CLEAN BATHROOM CEILING FANS AND MAKE SURE THEY WORK AS INTENDED

Every room in your home with humidity issues should have an exhaust fan that ensures moisture is directed to the **exterior** of the home. Rooms with a shower should definitely have a fan. Make sure the fan blades and decorative cover plates are clean, allowing humid air to be exhausted easily. Place a square of toilet tissue over the cover and see if it “sticks” when the fan is turned on. If you can, peek into the attic and see if you can confirm that the exhaust is actually vented to the outside and ensure that exhaust pipes are covered or wrapped with insulation to prevent icing up in cold weather.

CHECK LAUNDRY SINK TAPS & DRAINS AND CHECK FOR WATER STAINS BEHIND LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT

Home inspectors will turn on laundry sinks and check that the service is correctly installed (hot is always on the left) and the drain is working properly. We’ll also look behind washing machines and under sinks (and the area around each) to see if there are any stains or signs of recent water leaks. Leaks will be marked in our report as needing immediate attention.

HAVE SEPTIC “PUMPOUTS” AND OTHER RECORDS AVAILABLE FOR THE BUYER.

It is virtually impossible for a home inspector to check on the condition of a septic system. The entire system, including the **field, tank, laterals, pumps** and **service lines**, are underground. A professional septic person is best to do this type of inspection. If you are the seller, try to locate or mark the tank opening and show the buyers a copy of the last service record. The best time to have it thoroughly checked is when the tank is pumped.

STEPS - CONDITION OF SUPPORTS, STRINGERS, AND THE RISE & RUN

The condition of exterior steps and stairs leading to entrances, patios and decks is important. We’ve seen damaged wood surfaces, weathered and broken stringers and loose supports. We look at spacing - the height of the step (rise) and the width of the step (run), step width, handrails, covering material, nosing and anything else that would make the steps unsafe to walk on - or for children to play on. Most people walking up and down steps automatically assume that they are safe.

ELECTRICAL PART II - WHAT A SHOCK

Last month I addressed service box issues and the importance of getting a **permit** when modifications are made to the electrical wiring. Permits can be purchased by anyone, and just about anyone can do the work **BUT... only a qualified professional** can “**sign-off**” on the job, assuring that it is done properly and up-to-code. This is what the permit is all about. SAFETY!

After examining the service panel for things such as amperage, wire sizes, breakers, clamps and bushings, home inspectors then direct their attention to the actual wiring which travels from room to room. Serious safety concerns are always possible when amateurs do the work.

The BC Electrical Code is voluminous and includes pages of rules and specifications that are designed to prevent overheating, electrical failure or harm to people. As inspectors, we search for concerns relating to: wire sizes, routing of wires through beams and studs, distance of wiring from water and heat, sharp bends or dangerous

installations, improper junctions, exposed wiring, improper splices, spacing of outlets, location of outlets, GFCI and AFCI outlets, distances from sinks, toilets or other water sources, etc. The list is quite extensive. **Some of the more obvious and visible concerns are:** **loose junction boxes & missing cover plates**, **overloaded outlets**, **permanent extension cords**, **reversed polarity & ungrounded outlets**, **unprotected wiring**, **hidden junction boxes (behind walls or ceilings)**, **improper circuit labelling**, **damaged or frayed wiring**, **indoor wires used outdoors**, **outlets not GFCI protected or improper cover plates**.

Older homes could have **knob and tube** wiring which may or may not be accepted by insurance companies. Other major concerns include the use of **aluminium wiring** and **inadequate amperage** - homes over 861 square feet (80 m²) must have a minimum of 100 amp service, amongst other things. Some insurers will give buyers time to address these concerns or have the home “approved” by a qualified professional.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF “A HOME INSPECTOR”

WHAT KIND OF PHONE CALLS DO HOME INSPECTORS GET?

1. **Hello, do you inspect appliances?** - *No, we are not required to do this, but many of us will turn them on and look for leaks, venting, overheating, noise, etc. We do not do dishes, laundry or cook meals.*
2. **Hello, I have a squeak somewhere in the house, can you come over and fix it?** *No.*
3. **Hello, will you guarantee you will find every problem?** *Certainly; but be prepared to pay for 5 or 6 professionals to come over for a few days.*
4. **Hello, my roof leaked last year after a roofer said it was OK, what can I do?** *Fix it this year... but get a different roofer to do the work.*
5. **Hello, how much do you charge?** *This varies somewhat with the size, location, age, type of building (mobile, log cabin, strata, etc.) See my webpage.*
6. **Hello, do you inspect draperies?** *No*
7. **Hello, will you inspect or repair my septic system?** *Sorry, I don't own a backhoe.*
8. **Hello, where is the nearest fire hydrant?**
9. **Hello, can you give me a price estimate of repairs so I can reduce my offer?** *No, that is not required in our standards. It is difficult to cost estimate some things due to the complexity of repairs and the distance from suppliers.*
10. **Hello, does the dog next door bite?**
11. **Hello, I have flies in my house. Did you miss something?**

This is the 9th newsletter in this series.

Having homes inspected before listing may uncover problems that may not have been noticed or disclosed by the current homeowner.

When a **pre-listing inspection** is requested, I will complete a detailed and thorough inspection. When finished, I'll sit down with client and explain the various findings. After concerns have been addressed, I will re-inspect the property (usually at no charge) and revise the original report to reflect the changes.

For back issues of all my newsletters, see www.okvalleyinspector.ca click on the “newsletters” tab.



www.okvalleyinspector.ca

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