



## Home Inspection Services Newsletter

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December, 2008

### Educational Section: **Electrical Inspection**

The Electrical inspection performed by a home inspector is not as comprehensive as an electrical system review by a qualified electrical contractor for three main reasons: a home inspection is not invasive, is not a code inspection, and does not employ specialized equipment. However, a home inspection should uncover the type of deficiencies that warrant a complete electrical system evaluation by an electrical contractor. Below is an overview of what a home inspector reviews and some common deficiencies:

**Observe Electrical feed to the meter** (either overhead or underground)

**Common issues:** Tree branches on overhead wires, rotted risers

**Open the main panel box** and report the size of the power service, the type of electrical wiring, grounding, and circuit protection

**Common issues:** Improper connections, over-fused circuits (breakers/fuses too large), double taps, arcing/charring/melting of wire insulation (signs of overheating), unprofessional workmanship, solid Aluminum wiring (has been known to cause fires in some cases).

**Observe electrical wiring** including exposed connections

**Common Issues:** Unprotected electrical wiring (subject to damage from physical contact or the environment), electrical splices not in junction boxes (common in attics), improper/unprofessional wiring.

**Test a representative number of receptacles, switches and GFCI circuits.** Most inspectors also test arc fault breakers if practical to do so.

**Common Issues:** Receptacles that are miss wired (hot & neutral reversed, neutral and ground reversed, etc), ungrounded, dead, improperly mounted, damaged, or improper type for location. GFCIs that are not present, dead, won't trip, or reset. Lights that don't light.

**Observe (remove covers) sub electrical panels**

**Common Issues:** Same as in main panel box plus neutral & ground bonded (tied together).

## Inspection Item for December: **Yard Watering & Pool**

Days are shorter and temperatures are cooler. This means that plants need watering less often and the pool filter time can be reduced.

**Plant watering Rule of thumb;** water your yard plants the same amount of time but a lot less often. My drips are now on a two week cycle.

**Pool filter:** Rule of Thumb; run one hour for every 10 degrees of temperature (right now 5 to 6 hours). Remember, most electricity service provider's rate plans charge less for night time energy use.

## Question of the Month: **Why should soil slope away?**

The ground adjacent to the house should slope away from the foundation. The recommended standard is 1 inch per foot for 6 feet. This ensures that rain water does not collect next to a home's foundation. The prime reasons involve the integrity of the foundation and pests.

**Foundation integrity:** Some soils expand when wet. If these soils are present proximate to the foundation or under the slab, **structural movement** will result.

**Pests:** Most bugs like moist areas. Wet soil near a homes foundation are a welcome mat for **termites** (yard watering next to the foundation also invites termites).

## Safety Tip of the Month: **Holiday lights**

Manufacturers of the holiday lights attach a warning label advising the maximum number of light strings that should be plugged into each other (usually 3). Pay attention to this warning – it is there to prevent overheating and the possibility of a resultant fire. REMEMBER, these lights are **inexpensive**. Do not repair; splice wires, etc. for the same reason. Please be safe this holiday season.

Inspection class for realtors: Arizona Academy of Real Estate (Bell and 99<sup>th</sup> Ave) offers a **3 credit hour course** “lowering risk through inspection”. This course is taught by Mark Andrews (yours truly). I promise that it will be educational and fun! Contact the Academy for dates and details. Ph# 623 505 5380

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***Let our experience work for you!***



Daryl Gates



Mark Andrews



Lauren Andrews