



## Home Inspection Services Newsletter

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February, 2008

### Educational Section: **Under Slab water leaks**

Since yours truly just experienced an under slab water leak at our home, I will detail the discovery and repair process (I hope you never get one)!

#### **Discovery of a potential leak:**

1. You hear water running in the home but can't find the source
2. Your water bill is much higher than the same month last year
3. The triangle dial on your water meter turns continually
4. You see a "permanent" water/wet area around your foundation

#### **Finding the location of the leak (assuming it's under the slab)**

1. The plumber calls in a specialist. Sending an electrical charge into the pipes allows the specialist to trace the copper/galvanized piping and mark its location on the floor.
2. Pressuring the pipes with compressed air and utilizing a headset and "stethoscope", the specialist pin points the location of the leak within about a foot. Masking tape "X" marks the spot.

#### **Fixing the leak**

1. The plumber jackhammers a hole in the slab at the "X"
2. The plumber digs out the pipe and locates the break
3. The plumber repairs/replaces the pipe
4. The plumber backfills the pipe and re-cements the hole in the slab

Note: The plumber may recommend rerouting the piping through the attic, etc. This may be the best option; especially with very expensive flooring, cabinetry, etc.

#### **Fixing the floor/cabinets, etc.**

1. This is the responsibility of the homeowner

#### **So, what happened at our home? Following the above scenario:**

- Lauren heard the water running and saw a wet area at the patio
- The home warranty company sent a plumber who called in a specialist to isolate the leak – Under slab/below kitchen cabinets
- I removed the dishwasher and the corner cabinets

- The plumber opened a hole in the slab and found a pin hole in a copper pipe, replaced that section, and repaired the slab
  - I spent a week repairing the cabinets and putting the kitchen back
- Bottom line:** \$1500 (\$1000 paid by warranty company), plus \$100 for supplies and 30 hours of my time and \$200 to replace the main shut off (old gate valve didn't work). See Safety tip of the month (below).

## Maintenance Item for Feb: Termites

(Each month, we select appropriate items so that over a 12 month period you are reminded to attend to most common household maintenance/inspection items.) Pest professionals recommend that Arizona homes be inspected for termites annually. If evidence of termite activity is found during the annual inspection, damage is generally not an issue. Many pest companies perform these inspection **for free** "in hopes" of finding and selling a termite treatment. **NOTE:** The monthly service that sprays your home for insects (not termites) is not inspecting for termites.

## Question of the Month: What is utility tag out?

Utilities are off on many of the valleys foreclosed homes. When the utility company turns them back on, an unsafe condition will result in the utility company **locking the meter and applying a repair tag** to the home. We see this with gas furnaces, water (fixtures removed and water flowing freely in the home), and on older electrical panels that do not meet current safety standards.

## Safety Tip of the Month: Water shut offs

Older gate valves and kitchen and bath shut offs frequently do not operate. Since you will only know this when you **"need to shut off the water"**, we recommend having all older valves that are not in regular use changed to ball valves and quarter turn angle stops (in bathrooms, laundry, and kitchen). Consider having a plumber change all of these valves now and not having to hold your breath when turning an older valve.

**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 details. Ph# 623 505 5380

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