



Home Inspection Services Newsletter

February, 2009

Educational Section: **Low Sloped Roof (aka Flat)**

Roofs are considered “low sloped” if their rise is **less than 2 feet in a 12 foot** run. Roofs must have a **minimum pitch of ¼” per foot** to facilitate drainage. Properly constructed low sloped roofs do not have low areas which allow water to pond. Standing water accelerates roofing deterioration and makes roofs more susceptible to water leakage. Low sloped roofs that are enclosed by parapet walls must have two drains (this can be two scuppers, an open side, two internal drains, etc.).

Common low sloped roofing materials are:

Rolled Roofing consists of multiple layers of asphalt based material which are sealed with hot tar. Rolled roofing has a typical life in AZ of 10 to 15 years. RR should be inspected and serviced at least annually. Seal coating (with appropriate materials) can extend expected life.

Built Up Roofing consist of multiple layers of tar/felt paper & liquid tar with a gravel/rock topping. The gravel/rock top layer acts to hold the roofing in place and to protect the cap sheet (top layer) from deteriorating UV sun rays. Typical life of this roofing is 12 to 15 years.

Plastic & Rubber sheeting materials: There is a wide range of products available with varied manufacturer’s claims of 20+ years of life. These materials are more commonly used on industrial/commercial buildings.

Foam consists of several inches of Urethane foam with an elastomeric topcoat for UV protection. Properly installed and maintained foam roofs can last for 20 to 30 years. Regular maintenance includes patching of holes (bird damage) and re-topcoating (critical to the life of the roof).

Summary: Regardless of the type of roofing, **all low sloped roofs are prone to leakage** and require **regular inspection and maintenance**. Regular inspection includes looking for moisture stains on ceilings. Many low sloped roofs have installation deficiencies (areas of water ponding, blisters in foam, improper pitch to scuppers, etc.). When re-roofing,

obtain multiple proposals from licensed contractors, understand your roofs issues, and ensure that previous deficiencies are corrected.

Maintenance Item for Dec: **Dryer Vent Lint**

It's not easy to pull out the dryer, disconnect the exhaust hose, and vacuum the hose and dryer. People will go for years without cleaning those areas. That lint can fully or partially block the exhaust and can be a **fire hazard**. The regularity of cleaning depends on the amount of use and the type and method of piping outside the home (vertical exhaust through the roof clogs quicker). We suggest cleaning it, mark the date on the calendar, clean it again in 6 months and then decide how often cleaning needs to take place.

Question of the Month: **Black caps in front yard?**

The 4 inch black plastic caps in the yard are underground waste line (sewer lateral) clean outs. These allow snaking or routing of the home's main sewer line. Why two? One clean-out angles toward the home and one towards the sewer/septic connection. Older homes do not have clean outs (unless the system was retrofitted or the sewer line was replaced).

Safety Tip of the Month: **Fire Extinguishers**

I seldom see these critical fire safety devices during a home inspection. We strongly recommend accessible fire extinguishers in the garage and in the kitchen. Both of these areas are more prone to fires. If you currently have fire extinguishers, please check them to be sure that they are fully charged.

Inspection class for realtors: I offer several classes for realtors including a 3 hour class for credit (in conjunction with Arizona School of realtors). I also have programs from 30 minutes to an hour for new realtors covering such items as CBS codes, Standards of Practice, understanding an inspection report, etc. Feel free to call on me to help.

Let our experience work for you!



Daryl Gates



Mark Andrews



Lauren Andrews

H&A Services, LLC

(480) 614-0015 (623) 561-1709

www.hainspect.com