



## Home Inspection Services Newsletter

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February, 2010

### Educational: **Water damage and related problems**

Water damage can be very expensive and is often avoidable. Perform the following inspections to detect water leakage and minimize damage:

**Critical:** Before testing water valves or working on plumbing issues, you must know where the main shut off valve to the home is and whether it works. A plumber's key (T-wrench) should be on hand in case water needs to be turned off at the meter (know where your water meter is).

- Check the **triangle dial on your water meter** regularly for movement. If the triangle is turning, water is flowing!
- **Test angle stops** (valves below sinks and toilets) for leakage and to be sure that they work. If these valves are old and have not been used, do not use excess pressure to operate; have them changed.
- **Test sinks and tubs** monthly for leakage. Observe drain plumbing while a full sink is draining. Observe feed pipes when the water is running full force.
- Check the water **feed plumbing to the refrigerator**
- Observe the feed and drain plumbing **behind the washing machine** as well as the wall below the drain box
- Check the **water heater** for both leakage and rust. Rust is a sign of slow leakage. Be sure to open access panels and look for leakage or rust. Replace rusted or leaky water heaters.
- Check the **AC condensate drain** area for signs of leakage. Most of these systems are "out of sight, out of mind" as they are located in the attic, in closets, etc.
- Review **walls and ceiling** for moisture stains (usually roof related)
- Review areas **around doors and windows** for staining
- Review **walls and baseboards proximate to bathrooms** (don't skip the closet that backs up to the bathroom)

**To be very pro-active, have a plumber change the angle stops, washer hoses, and shut off valves to more modern, robust types.**

## Monthly Question: **How is a water meter checked?**

Most water meters have a **small triangular dial** which spins when water is flowing through the meter. This is the first item that I check during a home inspection. I watch the triangle for about 20 seconds, if there is movement; I'll look for reasons during the home inspection (toilet running, pool auto fill, etc.) If I can't find the source of the movement, further evaluation by a plumbing contractor will be recommended. I urge each of you to **check your meter on a monthly basis**. Catching a leak early is the key to minimizing water cost or moisture related water damage.

## Maintenance Items for Feb: **Dryer Vent**

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.

## Safety Tip: **Washer hoses and valves**

The **hot** and **cold** water feed behind the clothes washer are a frequent source of water leaks. We recommend replacing inexpensive (especially older rubber hoses) with a modern reinforced type. We also recommend changing older shut offs to ball valves and **shutting off the water when the washing machine is not in use.**

**Inspection classes for realtors:** Please feel free to call on me. I have several prepared power point presentations about the home inspection process but am also happy to come in and answer questions.

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



Daryl Gates



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