



## Home Inspection Services Newsletter

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January, 2007

### Educational Section: **Plumbing Inspection**

#### ***What constitutes a Plumbing inspection by a home inspector?***

Per the standards of practice for home inspection, the **inspector shall observe:**

**A:** Interior water supply and distribution system including: piping materials, fixtures & faucets, functional flow, leaks, and cross connections.

**B:** Interior drain, waste and vent systems (DWV), including: traps, drain/waste/vent piping, leaks, and functional drainage.

**C:** Hot water systems including: water heating equipment, normal operating controls, automatic safety controls, chimneys/flues, and vents.

**D:** Interior fuels storage equipment, supply piping, venting and supports.

**E:** Sump Pumps

The **inspector shall describe:**

**A:** Water supply and distribution piping materials, DWV piping materials, water heating equipment

**B: Operate all plumbing fixtures**, including their faucets and all exterior faucets attached to the house

***The inspector is NOT required to:***

**A:** State the effectiveness of anti-siphon devices.

**B:** Determine whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private.

**C:** Operate *automatic safety controls*.

**D:** Operate any valve except water closet flush valves, fixture faucets and hose faucets.

**E:** Observe: water conditioning systems, fire and lawn sprinkler systems, on-site water supply quantity and quality, on-site waste disposal systems, foundation irrigation systems, spas (except for functional flow and functional drainage).

**Comment:** As you can see, inspectors do a lot of observing, describing and some operating. Much of the plumbing system is hidden in the walls, under the slab, under the ground, etc. and is not observable. This is why we look for stains and evidence of leakage, observe the water meter for movement, fill and drain sinks and observe flow. We do not operate valves that are not in normal use because they have a tendency to freeze up (if they subsequently break, it

can be an expensive mess). Remember, inspectors are invited guests in the home and are cautious not to cause damage.

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

(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.) 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: **What is a Structural crack?**

Most home inspectors are not qualified to positively identify foundation/wall cracks as structural. When cracking is atypical, review by qualified professionals (structural engineers, foundation experts, etc.) is recommended. Cracks with displacement (offsets), large cracks, V-cracks (Non-uniform width) fit this category. An unusual number of cracks also warrant further review.

### 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:** 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! The next class is scheduled for January 8th Contact the Academy for details. Ph# 623 505 5380

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