



## Home Inspection Services Newsletter

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June, 2009

### Educational: **7 Pitfalls to avoid in viewing REOs**

Whether you're a prospective buyer or an agent showing bank owned properties, you have potential to cause damage, incur liability, or assume unwanted costs. Admittedly, these pitfalls are mostly related to vacant properties but that's the lion's share of our market right now.

1. **NEVER, EVER, push the button to operate the garage door!**  
Many properties have obstructions in the guide rails such as padlocks, screw drivers, bolts, steel wire (HUD homes have this). You will damage the door or the opener system. If you must open the overhead door, carefully examine the guide rails first.
2. **Never, EVER turn on the water without inspecting the plumbing** fixtures in the home. Look for open pipes under sinks, at toilets, at water heaters. Be sure that valves are off at washer and refrigerator feed lines. If dishwasher is missing check water feed line. Be ready to run into the home and listen for water flow.
3. **Don't turn on the electrical power before looking** at the homes electrical fixtures and exposed wiring (at removed fixtures); as well as viewing AC, pool, and water heater equipment.
4. **Don't turn on AC until** you've looked at the unit. Don't set the temperature below normal. If the vacant house is 90 degrees, the unit cools the same whether set at 80 or 50. Imagine the electric bill if you forget to turn off an AC unit that you set at 50!
5. **Don't forget to turn off** the water and electric if you've turned them on. A small drip at the refrigerator feed line will be a moldy mess in a week.
6. **Don't skip the "professional evaluation phase"**. When the home inspector recommends further evaluation, an electrician, roofer, or plumber may surprise you with additional findings.
7. **Don't utilize non licensed people** for big issues like the roof, electrical, and plumbing problems.

## Question of the Month: **Why has water usage jumped?**

So, you haven't changed a thing but your water usage is way up. Here's my approach: **Check the triangular dial at your water meter.**

1. **If stopped**, little or no water is running now.
  - a. Operate the sprinkler and yard drip system and look for leaks, broken pipes, etc.
  - b. Operate the pool equipment and look for leaks
  - c. Flush toilets and make sure they stop
  - d. Record the numbers on your water meter daily and compare
2. **If turning**, water is running somewhere
  - a. Shut off the auto fill to pool & recheck the meter
  - b. Shut off the water to the yard system & recheck the meter
  - c. Carefully listen for water flow at all water fixtures
  - d. Call a plumber

## Maintenance Item for May: **Condensate Drip**

When humid air is made cooler, water is squeezed out. This occurs at your AC unit's evaporator coil located near the air handler (blower system). Water collects in a pan under the coil and is piped away. You must know where these pipes terminate. Regular inspections to ensure that condensate is draining properly are critical. Bugs nest in pipes causing blockages. Water then back ups and overflows the drain pans. Be vigilant this time of year; **blockages in condensate drain lines are very common.** With the AC running, inspect the termination of condensate pipes for water flow on a regular basis.

## Safety Tip of the May: **Swimming Pool GFCI for light**

Since 1973, pool lights have been required to be on a GFCI protected circuit. Don't use your pool light until you have tested the GFCI. If working correctly, test regularly. If the GFCI receptacle (usually in the pool equipment area) does not trip when tested or if the pool light does not go out when the GFCI is tripped, have the pool light circuit evaluated by an electrician. This is a serious safety issue.

**Inspection class for realtors:** We offer several classes for realtors. Please feel free to call on me to help.

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



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