



Home Inspection Services Newsletter

March, 2008

Educational Section: **Electrical Inspection**

What constitutes an Electrical inspection by a home inspector?

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

- A:** Service entrance conductors
- B:** Service equipment, grounding, main over current device, main and sub-panels
- C:** Amperage and voltage ratings of the service
- D:** Branch circuit conductors, their over current devices, and the compatibility of their ampacities and voltages
- E:** The operation of a *representative number of installed* lighting fixtures, switches and receptacles located inside the home (one per room)
- F:** The polarity and grounding of all receptacles within six feet of interior plumbing fixtures and all receptacles in garage or carport, and on the exterior of inspected structures
- G:** The operation of ground circuit interrupters (GFCIs)

The **inspector shall describe:**

- A:** Service amperage and voltage
- B:** Service entry conductor materials
- C:** Service type as being overhead or underground
- D:** Location of main and distribution panels

The **inspector shall report:** Any observed aluminum branch circuit wiring

The inspector is NOT required to:

- A:** Insert any tool, probe or testing device inside the panels
- B:** Test or operate an over current device except ground fault interrupters
- C:** Dismantle any electrical device or control other than to remove covers of the main and auxiliary distribution panels
- D:** Observe: low voltage systems, smoke detectors, telephone, security, cable TV, intercoms, or other ancillary wiring that is not a part of the primary electrical distribution system.

Comment: The main difference between home inspectors relative to electrical inspections relates to experience, knowledge (there are several suspect electrical panels and circuit breakers, etc.), and laziness (standards allow testing of one outlet per room – thorough inspectors test all accessible).

Maintenance Item for March: **Yard plant drips**

(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.) Outside plant & tree watering season is upon us again. We strongly recommend taking a course sponsored by your water provider. Most systems are not set up optimally. Plants have grown, drips are the wrong size, drips are too close to the plant stem, drips still function where plants have died, etc. Parts for yard sprinkler and drip systems are inexpensive. Don't rely on your yard service, get educated & use water wisely. Your plants will show their appreciation.

Question of the Month: **AC Temp split variance**

Why is the AC temperature split different than those of HVAC contractors?

The home inspector measures the temperature difference between the air return and the closet room vent. The HVAC contractor takes a measure in the plenum before and after the air handler. Because this generally requires creating an opening in the ducting, this procedure is beyond the scope of a home inspection. Accordingly, home inspectors accept a split of 15+ degrees whereby most AC contractors look for 18+ degrees as a minimum acceptable split.

Safety Tip of the Month: **Washer hoses & 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 class for realtors: Arizona Academy of Real Estate (Bell and 99th 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 March 13th. Contact the Academy for details. Ph# 623 505 5380

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