



Home Inspection Services Newsletter

March, 2010

Educational: **Roof Leaks on tiled roofs**

2010 has been an unusually wet spring. Directly related, we've seen more moisture stained ceilings, walls, and attics than ever before. This article should serve as a reminder that **just because your roof hasn't leaked before does not mean it won't leak during the next storm**. Be diligent and inspect for signs of moisture intrusion during and after each storm. Where are the leaks?

Tile roofs usually leak at **roof transitions** and **roof penetrations**

- **Transitions** are changes of elevation or direction. Custom homes have a lot of transitions. Transitions are not always flashed (water proofed) correctly and each is a vulnerable spot. Those bump-ups are pretty but often leak in time or during wind driven storms.
- **Penetrations** such as plumbing vents, electrical cables, HVAC ducting, skylight, light tunnels, and chimney's have to be flashed correctly or leakage will occur.

Since the tiles are not water tight, **wind driven rain often gets under the tiles**. Aging of the underlayment (tar paper) results in deterioration (holes, brittleness, etc.). In time, water under the tiles that would have flowed down the surface of the underlayment, now finds an opening into the home. Accordingly, the location of stains in the home is generally not exactly the location of the water penetration. That of course is what makes the exact location of a leak so hard to find.

Well constructed **tile roofs should last 20 to 30 years** before re-roofing is necessary (homes built in the 80s). The process is the removal of the tiles and the application of new underlayment and flashing. Additional tiles are often needed to meet today's overlap standards. Damaged roof decking will be replaced as well.

Home inspectors cannot tell a client if a roof leaks or will leak. We can only report on evidence of previous leakage. Should we find evidence, you

should obtain further information including the age of the roof. Evaluation of the roof by a licensed roofer is generally prudent as well.

Monthly Question: Should I close an AC vent?

So, you're not using a room or two and figure that closing the AC vents will save you money. Unfortunately, that's not the case. All HVAC ducts leak (the best installations leak about 6%). Some of the older metal ducts can leak 25% (unsealed seams). When you close the vent to a room, you are pressurizing the ductwork to that vent and increasing air leakage. You're also making the air handler work harder to accomplish the pressurization. **Closing those vents actually costs you money.**

Maintenance Items for March: AC Service

Now is a good time to have your AC equipment serviced. Most companies will run the equipment, test coolant pressures, temperatures splits, view capacitors & contacts, and check electrical current draw on motors.

Not included are air leaks at the air handler, leaky ducting, dirty evaporator coils, and checking the balance of AC from room to room. If you're having your AC "tuned up", great! I recommend that you find out exactly what the "tune up" includes. Call around for quotes if you want additional items reviewed.

Safety Tip: Don't compromise your home's "fire block"

Fire blocking is an essential safety feature of a home. Fire rated materials physically separate the garage from the living space, the underside of wood stairs from the second floor, the opening around the fireplace flue pipe and the attic, etc. Fire blocking's purpose is to retard the spread of fire allowing the homes occupants time to evacuate and hopefully minimize fire damage. The most common areas where people compromise the fire blocking are: Adding non fire rated **pull down stairs in the garage** and removing sheetrock and **adding shelves under stairs.**

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 an answer questions.

Let our experience work for you!



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