



Home Inspection Services Newsletter

October, 2010

Educational: **After storm inspections**

Every couple of years, we experience a violent storm including high winds, rain, and hail. Two weeks ago, much of the valley had such a storm. Where I was, winds gusted to 50 mph, rain came sideways, and hail stones were ½ an inch in size. Such storms create damage which sometimes goes unnoticed. Here are common areas of damage:

Roofing

- **Asphalt shingles** are often pitted by hail which may seriously damage the shingles or reduce their life. Wind may break off a few shingle tabs or blow off sections of roofing. Insurance companies have replaced many an older roof! Have a close look at shingles.
- **Concrete tile** roofs are tested by sideways rain. Driven rain will get under the tiles on most roofs thus testing the integrity of the underlayment (tar paper). Typical life of underlayment is 20 to 30 years. Tar paper becomes brittle as it ages resulting in openings in the paper thus allowing water to flow under the paper and through the wood roof deck. Inspect for moisture stains in the house and attic. Gusting wind can lift and drop tiles resulting in breakage. Broken tiles allow even gentle rain to flow under the tiles.
- **Clay and Ceramic tiles** have the same issues as concrete tiles but are more prone to breakage.

Skylights: The outer covering on older skylights is susceptible to hail damage. Look at sky lights for damage or cracks.

AC Units: Cooling coils (fins) are often hail damaged on **roof mounted** AC units. This results in a loss of efficiency. HVAC contractors can generally improve damage by combing (straitening the fins).

Windows and Doors that have never leaked often allow water to enter both by the force of the wind driven rain and by the vacuum effect of high winds passing over/around the home. Look for evidence of moisture

around windows and doors and have leaky units professionally sealed. Of course, there are the odd instances of broken glass from flying objects.

Stucco: Homes in several area communities experienced stucco damage. Damage to stucco is most common in areas where stucco is thin or where stucco is brittle (installation problem). Don't forget to examine the top of parapet walls, chimneys, etc.

Scorpions are very light and live in palm trees. Gusting winds often blow scorpions onto the roofs. Don't panic when these nasty guys enter your bathrooms through exhaust vents. You're not being invaded!

Monthly Question: **Are slab cracks serious?**

Cracking is inherent in concrete; hence most slabs crack. Typical cracks can range from small spider cracks to ¼ inch gaps. When flooring is removed, the installer should repair and seal slab cracks to forestall moisture and pest intrusion. Atypical and more serious cracks exhibit displacement which is a sign of movement. If one side of a crack is higher than the other by half an inch or more (displacement), it is prudent to have these cracks checked by a structural engineer or foundation contractor.

Maintenance Item for Oct: **Annual Reverse Osmosis (RO), Water softener, and Tank less water heater service**

If you've had any of the above systems installed, you understand the importance of annual professional maintenance on these systems. If you bought a home with these units, you may not. We recommend that these devices be professionally serviced when you move in to your new home and then annually serviced. Failure to do so will result in inferior performance and eventually failure of the device. Failure of any of these units (especially a tank less water heater) is expensive!

Safety Tip: **CPR**

CPR protocol has changed; for most circumstance to just chest compressions. The Red Cross offers courses on a regular basis. Invest a few hours and a minimum fee to learn CPR and basic first aid. You never know when you may be called on to make the difference between life and death. If utilized, these skills will probably be used with a family member or friend!

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!