



Home Inspection Services Newsletter

September 1, 2006

Educational Section: **Water Heaters**

Type and Size: There are a wide variety of residential water heaters that range in capacity from 15 to 120 gallons. Most are natural gas or electric heated. A few are solar assisted and a very small percentage are tank less (this article won't cover those).

Life Expectancy: Water heaters can be expected to last as long as their warranty (typically 5 to 8 years) but they will generally last longer.

Failure modes: Leakage is the most common although electric heating elements are known to fail as well. For this reason, all water heaters should be monitored on a regular basis. It is recommended that water heaters located inside the living space have a collection pan underneath that drains to the outside or into the home's waste plumbing.

Temperature settings: The water temperature should be set at a minimum of 110 degrees Fahrenheit to kill microbes and a maximum of 140 degrees to prevent scalding.

Circulators: Circulation pump(s) can be installed on the homes hot water loop to provide "instant" hot water to sinks, showers, and tubs. It is strongly recommended that these devices include a timer so that water is circulated during expected peak periods (AM shower time and dinner prep and clean up). Installation costs vary typically from \$300 to \$600. Some municipalities offer a rebate for water conservation.

Timers: Electric hot water heaters often have timers installed providing a full tank of hot water for peak periods but no recovery during off hours. Their purpose is energy savings.

Safety: TPR (Temperature Pressure Relief) Valves with discharge pipes were invented and mandated because early water heaters overheated and blew up (some taking the house with them). Home inspectors constantly report improperly installed TPR discharge pipes.

Flushing: Unless the water heater is flushed regularly (yearly), plumbers recommend leaving them alone (don't stir up problems).

Inspection Item for Sept.: **Exterior Wall Openings**

(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.)

Why: The main concerns with openings in the exterior of the home are **moisture** and/or **pest** intrusion. I know several people who have had bee infestations through relatively small openings (drilled holes, tears in vent screens, etc.). Eradication cost is typically \$500.00 plus clean up. Companies that treat scorpion infestations generally start by sealing all of the openings in the outside walls (you know what they think!).

What: Utilize a quality exterior rated caulk and fill in the openings.

Question of the Month: **Can I use an old report?**

Home inspector is called: “We’re buying a home that you inspected 3 months ago, please send us your report?” **Sorry.** The inspection firm was contracted and paid by a client to inspect the property “on their behalf”. An agreement was entered (between the client and the inspection firm) outlining the scope and limits of the inspection. The inspection was performed at **a point in time** and reports the condition of the property at that time. **The bottom line:** No inspector will become involved with a third party who has not paid or entered into an agreement for a report on a property where conditions may well have changed since the inspection.

Safety Tip of the Month: **Electrical Work**

One of the areas commonly written up is substandard electrical work including miss wired outlets, unprotected electrical wiring, improper splices, and over fused electrical circuits. Ask your fire marshal, electricity causes lots of fires. Don’t do your own electrical work; **Period.** If you suspect **non-professional workmanship** on your electrical system, have an licensed electrical contractor fix it.

Raffle for September: **Bottle of Red Wine– Mark’s Pick**

To enter, send a reply email with “September Raffle” in the subject along with your name and Ph# to Lauren@hainspect.com Susan G. from Scottsdale was August’s winner.

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Daryl Gates



Mark Andrews



Lauren Andrews

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