



Summer 2009

House Notes

Associated Master Inspectors • P.O. Box 230966 • Tigard, Oregon 97281 • 503.236.1812

- Visit our website at www.amipdx.com for maintenance tips and service provider recommendations
- Call Lisa in our office at 503.236.1812 to schedule an inspection

Big Changes to Washington State Inspection Licensing This Fall

Beginning on September 1, 2009, anyone who performs home inspections in Washington State will have to be licensed through the Washington State Department of Licensing. AMI inspectors Mark Lindgren and Jim Katen will be maintaining Washington State Home Inspector Licenses and can help you with your home inspection needs north of the border. To learn more about the rules and requirements for home inspectors in Washington State, visit the Department of Licensing's web page: <http://www.dol.wa.gov/business/homeinspectors/index.html>

HOME REPAIRS YOU SHOULD NOT IGNORE

A recent article in Consumer Reports magazine entitled "5 Home Repairs You Shouldn't Ignore," listed 5 important areas of the home that need to be properly maintained to avoid future repairs that could run into thousands of dollars. Although our Pacific Northwest climate varies from wringing wet to arid, the principles of home maintenance remain the same. Based on our work in the Portland metropolitan area Associated Master Inspectors (AMI) offers you their list of home repairs you should not ignore.

DRAINAGE - It is essential that roof gutters, downspouts and drains be unobstructed and rout the roof drainage water away from the house. Moisture intrusion into the crawl space or basement can damage the foundation and cause a host of structural problems including wood rot, insect infestation and mold. Overflowing gutters and standing water in the drain pipes are indications that the system needs cleaning or repair.

Groundwater drainage problems may be present but provide no visible evidence from above ground. Settlement in walks, patios and driveways may indicate drainage problems. Foundation cracking and settling is another result of drainage problems. The soil around the house should slope away from the house and the landscaping and final grade should not trap or impede the natural downhill flow of water. Sub soil drainage problems can be invisible outdoors and may require inspection of the crawl space.

ROOFING - Winter storms and winds can damage roof shingles and flashing details. According to AMI inspector Toby Deming, low level leaking may not be visible from inside the house so it is important to inspect the roof from the outside. As roofs age they become more brittle and more susceptible to storm damage. Good quality installations and repairs have a slightly higher cost but result in a good return on the investment by having a longer service life.

SIDING - If siding is not properly caulked and flashed against moisture intrusion, there is an increased probability of leaking that can result in expensive repairs. All caulking joints should be intact. Cracked or loose caulking should be removed and replaced with a high grade caulk. Home improvement centers or manufacturer's web sites can provide education in proper caulking techniques. Maintaining the exterior paint will help to protect the siding. Exterior walls with high exposure to sunlight may require more maintenance.

There should be a minimum 4-6" clearance between the siding and the soil to prevent moisture related damage. This rule applies to wood siding, brick veneer, stone veneer, stucco, vinyl, plywood and foundation vent sills. The soil grade should slope away from the house as much as possible.

WOOD DESTROYING INSECTS- Spring is the time of increased insect activity. AMI inspector Mark Lindgren says that swarming winged ants may be indicative of new colonies being formed and should be evaluated by an independent third party. Repeated ant sightings could be a result of a nearby carpenter ant nest. Avoiding earth / wood contact, removing rotted wood from the house and yard and keeping debris from accumulating in the yard will help to discourage carpenter ants. Infestations should be professionally treated.

Subterranean termites are attracted by warmth and easy access to wood or cellulose, and are often found near water heaters, furnaces and earth filled concrete porches that get direct sunlight. Mud tubes are sometimes present but infestations are difficult to find and should be professionally treated.

MOLD/MILDEW - Mold is a result of moisture intrusion into the structure as a liquid or a vapor. Mold can be a precursor to wood destroying fungi and has the potential to cause costly structural damage. Performing air testing or sampling for mold is costly and inconclusive. AMI inspector Charlie Rouse recommends visually inspecting for mold as a cost effective approach that is much more likely to produce a solution. Attics and crawl spaces are good places to inspect for mold and Charlie says the location and pattern of the fungi growth will often provide good clues as to the source and cause. Mildew is a result of moisture vapor condensing on a cold surface. Mildew usually does not result in wood destroying fungi, but it is a nuisance and can cause an allergic reaction in some people. Dyer vents, bathroom and kitchen and laundry exhaust fans should be in good working order, clean and ducted outdoors. The crawl space should be dry. Sometimes wall and ceiling insulation needs repair to keep warm interior air from condensing on the finished wall or ceiling.

FOUNDATION CRACKS - Some foundation cracks are harmless, but others may indicate a need for repair. According to AMI inspector Jim Katen, cracks larger than 3/16" may be a problem and should be evaluated. Smaller cracks are often harmless and can be filled with an epoxy-injection system. Jim recommends monitoring new cracks with tape to determine if they are expanding.

Experience isn't expensive, it's priceless.

Reminder: Have your clients visit our website at www.amipdx.com to look for a coupon and save money on their AMI home inspection.

