

HomeNotes

Home Maintenance Information from INSPECT & REPORT



INSPECT & REPORT

Homes - Mold - Radon

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A New THERMOSTAT

What is the best advice on installing and maintaining a new thermostat?

In regards to location, even homes with modern thermostats may still be uncomfortable. This symptom can be caused by an improperly located or defective thermostat. In general, thermostats should be located on an inside wall about five feet from the floor. Thermostats react to the temperature of the air in their immediate vicinity, so they should be kept a reasonable distance from random sources of heat or cold such as lamps and appliances, drafty doors and windows, and heating registers and radiators.

As far as maintenance goes, dust on the electrical contact of the thermostat can cause the device to perform erratically. Dust can be controlled by occasionally removing the cover and gently blowing on the mechanism or by using a soft artist's brush to clean parts. The thermostat's electrical parts and contacts should not be touched with fingers.

Cyber Home Tips

Check out these two sites to give you insight into a home's windows and "weather" to fix or to upgrade them!

Window Upgrading
efficientwindows.org
Old Window Repair
windowrepair.com

The Importance of GUTTER MAINTENANCE

Many problems can be avoided by simply maintaining gutters! Spending a bit of time twice a year inspecting, cleaning, and repairing gutters and downspouts may mean never being troubled by flooded basements, damaged roofs, rotten siding, crumbling mortar joints, or peeling and cracking paint.

Gutters should catch precipitation flowing off the roof and carry it to the downspouts, which carry water away from the house through drain pipes or the ground's grading. Water that collects near the foundation, streaked house paint, and water in the basement are symptoms of gutters that are not working properly.

Here are some tips on how to maintain gutters:

1. Inspection and maintenance each spring and fall.

Regular maintenance will prevent most serious problems. Leaves and other debris should be removed with a broom. A garden hose can be used to wash away other small items. A plumber's snake can be used to clean out the spout if there is blockage.

2. Gutter covers.

Wire or plastic strainers, which are very inexpensive, fit into the openings of downspouts and can catch leaves before they clog the pipe.

3. Leaks.

Pinhole leaks and leaks at connections can usually be sealed with silicone caulking compound. Patch kits are available for large leaks. If the leaks are large, replacement is often easier than gutter patching.

4. Straps and hangers.

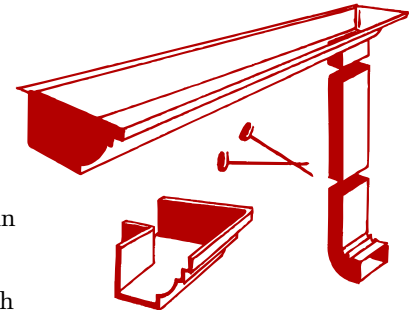
Gutter straps and hangers, including gutter spikes, should be resecured and renailed if needed.

5. Pitching.

Gutters should be pitched about one-sixteenth of an inch per running foot for proper drainage. The pitch can easily be checked by pouring a bucket of water at the opposite end of the downspout and watching the water flow out. If the water puddles in spots, the gutter hanger should be adjusted by renailling higher or lower on the roof with hot-dipped galvanized or aluminum nails.

6. Splashblocks.

Flooding problems often result when the downspout does not empty into a drainage system. Pools of rainwater can cause leaks in the basement. A concrete or fiberglass splashblock will cure most problems of this type.



— Home Maintenance Guide Series —

3 Steps to Avoid WATER LEAKS

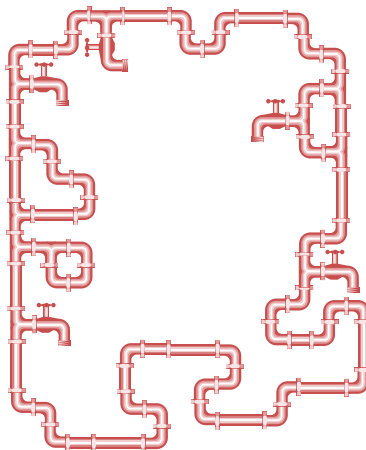
The storm windows are on, the windows are outfitted with weather-stripping, and now the house is ready for winter. Or is it? If the water pipes haven't been checked and they freeze this winter, there could be extensive flood damage.

1. Protect exposed water lines. Wrap exposed lines (found outside, in an attic, or in an unheated basement) with foam or insulation secured with duct tape — the colder the climate, the thicker the wrap. Take additional precaution by using a heated electrical wire if the pipes are exposed to severe elements.

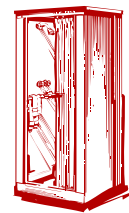
If the house will be vacant for prolonged periods, evacuate all water lines and shut off the water —letting it bleed out of the outside hoses. An air compressor attached to the kitchen faucet and hot water pipes with a hose can also be used to clear the line. Don't forget to turn off the heat source to the water heater and drain the tank.

2. Look at the checkbook. If the water bill is unusually high, there may be a leak.

3. Use your nose. If there's an unpleasant odor seeping from floors or walls near drains or sewers, there may be a problem.



Slow-draining FIXTURES



We've all come across a sink that would just not drain quickly.

What can cause a common slow-draining plumbing fixture?

- ▼ Small or partially blocked roof vent stack
- ▼ Sludge accumulation
- ▼ Broken pipe
- ▼ House sewer obstruction
- ▼ Improperly operating leach field

How can this common problem usually be fixed?

- ▼ Enlarge vent stack or clean pipe
- ▼ Pump out the system
- ▼ Repair the plumbing
- ▼ Remove the obstruction
- ▼ Have a septic professional check and address the leach field

HomeNotes™ contains basic information on the home and general topics of interest. Due to the variations in homes, individual recommendations require a comprehensive evaluation. To reprint any article in this newsletter, please contact our office. (HNWN03) © 2002-2003. All rights reserved.

The Benefits of a MOLD TEST

- 1. Peace of Mind** - Knowing if you have areas suspect to moisture intrusion that may be conducive to fungal growth. The intent of this survey is to identify areas that may be in need of microbial sampling. You will know if there are any current moisture problems that need fixing, and what sampling should be done to see if any fungal growth now exists.
- 2. Healthy Home** - Make your home as healthy as possible for you & your family. The presence of certain mold and mold spores in housing can result in mild to severe health effects in humans and can deteriorate the building materials in the dwelling resulting in structural damage. Health effects include, but are not limited to: asthma, allergy symptoms, watery eyes, sneezing, wheezing, difficulty breathing, sinus congestion, blurry vision, sore throat, dry cough, aches and pains, skin irritation, bleeding of the lungs, headaches, memory loss and fever. As humans vary greatly in their chemical make-up, so does the individual's reaction to mold exposure. For some people, a small number of mold spores can cause ill effects. In others it may take a more substantial exposure.
- 3. Knowing the health condition of the home you are buying.** The more information you have about the home you are buying, the better you will be at making an informed decision about purchasing it.

Visit www.InspectAndReport.com and www.MoldSurveyor.com today!

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