

# HomeNotes

Home Maintenance Information from INSPECT & REPORT



INSPECT & REPORT

Homes - Mold - Radon

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## Electric UPGRADE

By today's standards, a typical residential electrical system could be 100, 125, 150 or 200 amps. Federal guidelines and national codes require a minimum upgrade of 100 amps for a single-family residence.

If a home does not meet this minimum, one should consider to upgrade.

A licensed electrician should evaluate and analyze the system to determine the current and future power needs of the household. An upgrade isn't cheap (the national average for upgrading to 200 amps is over \$2,000), but it should be considered an investment. It can increase the value of the home and make it easier to sell. The homeowner should get bids from licensed electricians before commissioning the job. If the circuits are mapped out before the electrician arrives, it could cut costs of the job.



## Marketing Tips for SELLING YOUR HOME

Every homeseller can benefit from some simple tips before putting his residence on the market. For example, a pre-listing inspection could help identify the components of the house that are most in need of repair — which will make the home unattractive to potential buyers. Homeowners who hire a qualified inspector will find it well worth their investment.



Here are the six common problem areas that are typically identified by thorough home inspectors. Early correction of these problems will increase the house's marketability (and its selling price!).

- 1. Check the Major Systems.** After size, style, and location, nothing will sell a house quicker than the good condition of the home's basic structure and major mechanical systems. A pre-listing inspection of visible and accessible home components can reveal problems in the structure and systems, and an inspector will recommend the necessary repairs. The most important components to consider are the roof structure and covering; the foundation, basement or crawl spaces; the central heating and air-conditioning systems; the electrical and plumbing systems.
- 2. Make Maintenance Improvements.** These basic, simple, and usually inexpensive improvements will make the home more appealing to buyers. After all, first impressions count, so make the home "drive-by perfect" by trimming trees and shrubs, applying new caulking or weatherstripping as necessary, cleaning gutters of leaves and debris, and making sure all windows are free of cracks. Inside, the homeowner should replace bathroom caulk or grouting, ventilate closed basements and crawl spaces, regrade the soil around the foundation to keep water away from the house, replace dirty filters in the climate control systems and have the systems professionally serviced, and maintain chimneys, having them professionally cleaned and installing hoods or caps as needed.
- 3. Pay Attention to Details.** Fixing minor problems as they occur will indicate "loving care" to the potential buyer. The homeowner should repair leaky faucets, tighten loose doorknobs, replace damaged screens and windows, repair driveways, repaint walls and ceilings, and make sure all railings are secure. These simple steps will make sure the buyer doesn't leave with a bad impression.
- 4. Take Safety Precautions.** Inspectors pay attention to the items in the home that will help protect the dwelling and its occupants. Homeowners should install a smoke detector on each level of the home, keep flammable products away from water heaters, general

## Cyber Home Tips

Check these links for ideas on how to maintain your home in the Winter!

### Winter Maintenance

[homestore.com/HomeGarden](http://homestore.com/HomeGarden)

[homeimprovement/features/winter/default.asp](http://homeimprovement/features/winter/default.asp)

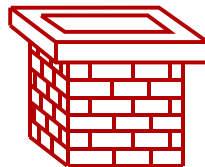
### Winter Maintenance 2

[mygreathome.com/fixitguide/repair/winterize.htm](http://mygreathome.com/fixitguide/repair/winterize.htm)

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## The Home Maintenance Guide Series

### Chimney MAINTENANCE



Why is chimney maintenance important? The answer is found in the important role a chimney plays in the house. Although most homeowners look at a fireplace as a decorative “plus,” but the chimney is more important than appearances indicate. In fact, chimneys can save the lives of those living in a household.

Dangerous fumes, including the odorless killer carbon monoxide, are released through the chimney. When gas and oil are burned in vented heating systems, the toxic fumes are released through a connector pipe into the chimney. Chimneys also create a draft – or flow of air – which provides the proper mixture of air and fuel for efficient heating of the home.

Obviously an item of such importance to a household should be carefully considered. The chimney should be properly sized and in the right condition to properly perform its tasks. Unfortunately, many homeowners do not know enough about their chimney to sufficiently answer questions about its upkeep or condition.

Homes heated by natural gas pose a special problem. The fumes produced by this high-efficiency fuel are cooler, containing high levels of water vapor. They produce higher condensation, and the flues on these units also contain chlorides picked up from house-supplied combustion air, which causes flues to plug up or deteriorate.

Other problems are associated with oil flues, which need to be cleaned and inspected annually. Soot deposits build up on the interior walls of the chimney, which may cause inefficient furnace operation to the blocked chimney.

In either case, problems can interfere with the flow of toxic gases and particles from the house. Improperly maintained units may also force carbon monoxide into a home.

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heaters and fireplaces, and install Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters in wet areas, such as the kitchen counter tops and bathrooms.

#### 5. **Make Cosmetic Improvements.**

In the world of real estate, looks do count, so homeowners should do all they can to assure their home is neat and attractive. Make sure the lawn is mown regularly, exterior walls and trim are clean, and the house is neat. Open windows and shades to let in light (which will give the home a bright appearance) and make sure those “hot spots” that buyers inspect closely — like kitchens and bathrooms — are up to the “white glove” test.

#### 6. **Prepare for the Buyer’s Inspection.**

The homeowner should have house records on hand to answer questions easily and confidently. Appliance receipts, service records, and warranties should be easily accessible, as should information about all major components (heating, air-conditioning, carpeting, etc.). Also have copies of the latest bills on hand to give prospective buyers an idea of their cost.

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. (HNWI04) © 2002-2004. 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](http://www.InspectAndReport.com) and [www.MoldSurveyor.com](http://www.MoldSurveyor.com) today!

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