



# HomeNotes

Home Maintenance Information from INSPECT & REPORT



**INSPECT & REPORT**

Homes - Mold - Radon

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## Lead In WATER?



Many homeowners “flush the pipes” by letting drinking or cooking water run for a minute after any period when the water has been standing in the pipes

for several hours. This can help reduce exposure to lead, which may be picked up in service pipes that carry water into homes. Solder used to connect copper pipes or older faucets may also be a source of lead in water.

The Environmental Protection Agency states that household water is a leading source of lead ingested by humans. Lead poisoning is especially dangerous for pregnant women and for young children, who may suffer damage to their brains and nervous systems as a result.

Flushing the pipes is no guarantee that the water will be safe. It's better to have water tested by a qualified professional for lead content before and after flushing to determine if there is a noticeable difference.

## Cyber Home Tips

Check out these decorating ideas to help increase the inside appeal of your home!

Decorating Ideas  
getdecorating.com

Budget Decorating

www.suite101.com/welcome.cfm/  
budget\_decorating

## Shedding Light On Your ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

When trying to determine the size of the electrical service, the primary factor is the size of the cable coming into the house. The size can be determined by measuring the width of the cable as follows:



- **60 amp cable is approximately 3/4" wide**
- **100 amp cable is approximately 1 3/16" wide**
- **150 amp cable is approximately 1 3/16" wide**
- **200 amp cable is approximately 1 7/16" wide**

The cable will dictate the size of the fuses or breaker needed to protect it.

### Sizing the Fuses or Breakers

The size of the fuse or breaker is dictated by the size of the wire as follows: 1.) 14-gauge wire = 15 amp 2.) 12-gauge wire = 20 amp 3.) 10-gauge wire = 30 amp.

14-gauge wire is normally the smallest wire that you will find in the service panel. 12-gauge is a little thicker than 14-gauge, and 10-gauge is thicker than the 12-gauge, and is normally used for 220 volt circuits.

You may be able to read the wire size on the outer insulation of the wire or you can buy a wire gauge from an electric supply store.

### How to Determine the Condition of Wiring

The condition of the old wire depends on the amount of usage, the age, and the manufacturer. The concern with the wire is the insulation around the wire more than the wire itself. This is because the insulation is the more vulnerable component.

The easiest way to know the condition of the wire is to bend it where it has not been bent. If you can bend it 180° and you do not expose the conductor, the wire is very good.

If you expose the conductor, the wire may still be okay. This will depend on how much it is exposed and how resilient the insulation is.

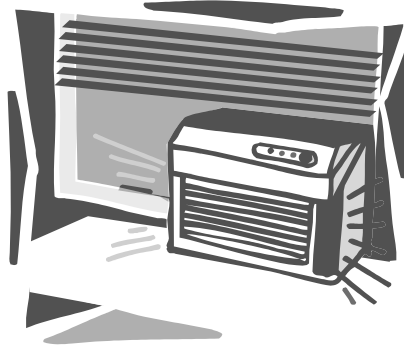
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## The Home Maintenance Guide Series

# BUYING An Air Conditioner

Things you should know when buying an air conditioner.

1. **You should size an air conditioner carefully because, in most areas of the country, air conditioning units serve to dehumidify as well as to cool.** A unit that is too large will certainly cool, however, it will not remove enough moisture from the air (dehumidify). You will still be uncomfortable because of the moist air and will have to call on the oversized unit to reduce the temperature three or four degrees more than if you had a properly sized unit.
2. **Check the unit for efficiency.** On the newer units you can look at the energy guide sticker. If you do not have an energy guide sticker, or you would like to know what it means, compare the BTUs or tonnage of the air conditioning unit to the electrical draw in amperage. Example: If you have one ton of air conditioning (one ton is equivalent to 12,000 BTUs) and your unit draws 7.2 amps, it would be more efficient than a one-ton unit that draws 8.0 amps.



**NOTE: You simply check the metal label on the air conditioning unit and look for the full load amps (FLA) or rated load amps (RLA) of the compressor.**

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. (HNSU04) © 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.

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If you cannot bend the wire 90° without exposing the conductor, the wire is probably marginal or worse.

If the insulation around the wire falls apart when you bend it, the wire probably needs replacement.

### 220 Volt Circuits

Almost all residential electrical services are single phase, which is what you need to make 220 volt circuits. This means there are two 110 volt poles and a ground.

The easiest way to determine if you have a single phase service would be to look at the weather head or mast head that is bolted to most houses up at or near the roofline. If you can see three wires connected, you have a single phase 220 volt service. If you have underground service, you will have to remove the cover panel to determine if you have single phase or not.

We recommend hiring a competent electrician for electrical improvements or repairs.

NOTE: The size or amperage of the electric service is different than the voltages.

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