



The Professional Inspector

Information Publication for Homeowners, Realtors, Mortgage Brokers, Insurance Brokers and Builders

2010 Fall Home Shows

The fall is fast approaching and what better time to upscale your business marketing having your company exposed by thousands of consumers by participating in a home show. BC Home Shows Ltd has several home shows scheduled throughout the Province of BC and is a great and affordable way to expose your business. My business over the past 10 years has participated in the Spring and Fall home shows and I have drawn hundreds of new clients for their residential and specialty inspection needs. The fall home shows will be at the following next Cities:

- In Salmon Arm during October 15 – 17.
- In Kamloops during October 22 – 24.
- In Merritt during October 29 – 30.

For more information you can visit their website at www.bchomeshows.ca or contact by phone at 250 377-8380.

The Importance Of Gutters

I performed a home inspection in the North Okanagan area a few months ago where a new home that was constructed in 2008 had no above grade drainage system designed and in place to control water drainage from the surface of the roof. The area size of the roof is very large and since it was raining that day I could observe a significant amount of water flowing off the roof. As my clients where with me, I was able to point out to them the damage was being caused to the home and the potential damage that was not visible.

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Firstly, as the water was draining off the roof and onto the finished surface grade, the water hitting the lawn was splashing back towards the home onto the wood siding and trim at various locations. This was caused by present evidence the wood siding and wood trim to deteriorate the wood's paint/stain. Further, since joints around the windows, corners of the siding and areas of the trim covering where poorly finished, flashed, small open gaps, and no sealant applied, water entry was present to seep behind those areas to the building envelope (building wrap, plywood sheathing membrane, etc). This type of allowance to occur can be detrimental over a short and long period of time if not corrected to control water run off from the roof.

The owner of the home is a developer and one would think he would know the importance of controlling the flow of water from the roof by installing gutters and drain spouts around the perimeter of the roof's edge. However, it surprised me the homeowner indicated that they were not needed as he had a soils engineer indicate that the ground underside and around the home has adequate water drainage. What's that got to do with controlling water drainage from the roof? Appears that the whole point here is missed and that ground soil drainage is a different issue.

Water control from the roof should be a number one priority if you want to have a house that is in good working order. Rainwater is a natural element that can wreak havoc on a house if it's not controlled by properly installed and maintained rain gutters. There are many misconceptions about gutters and as a result there are many mistakes homeowners are making. In some cases these mistakes are causing damage rather than preventing it.

The importance of properly installed and maintained gutters can't be stressed enough. Every house should have gutters, and in recent years building officials across the country have been recognizing this. Many municipalities around the country are now requiring gutters on all new residential construction. Here's why rain gutters are so important:

- Soil around the house is stabilized.
- Foundation problems can be avoided.
- Flooding under houses and in basements can be prevented.
- Erosion can be prevented and this preserves landscaping and turf.
- Water damage and deterioration to siding and trim can be prevented.
- Water damage and deterioration to doors and windows can be prevented.
- Water damage and deterioration to open decks can be prevented.
- Water staining on brick and stone masonry can be prevented.
- Settling and cracking of sidewalks, patios and driveways can be lessened.
- Exterior doors and garage overhead doors can be preserved.

The one downside to rain gutters is they require work. Homeowners must be vigilant in keeping them clean and in good working order. Chances are, if you have gutters you probably don't clean them out often enough. If you wait until they are full of leaves and if you are scooping soil out of your gutters, you are waiting far too long. If you have weeds and grass growing in your gutters you probably have caused some damage. After all, gutters aren't intended for gardening. Here are the problems that clogged gutters cause:

- Water damming occurs which can cause damage to eaves and water seepage into the soffits.
- Water can leak into the house and cause damage to walls and flooring.
- Mosquitoes can breed in the standing water.
- Tree leaves and needles in gutters can be a fire hazard, especially in areas prone to wild fires.
- Deterioration of gutters occurs which causes leaks and eventual failure.

The frequency with which you should clean out gutters depends on your house. Determining factors include proximity of trees to the roof line, the type of trees (deciduous vs. evergreen), and the slope of the roof. Low sloped roofs can require more frequent cleaning.

Houses with trees within ten feet of the roof line, gutters will need to be cleaned out twice a year at a minimum. In some cases gutters may need to be cleaned out a couple times in fall alone. One myth about gutters is that houses with no trees don't need to be cleaned. Gutter cleaning may still be required, especially on houses with asphalt shingles. Over time these shingles lose their granules and these granules make their way into the gutters.

The majority of houses with gutters don't have a system that is complete and installed correctly. A properly installed gutter system will include seamless gutters on every sloped roof edge. The gutters should not hold standing water, should not leak, should be securely fastened to the fascias, and should have downspouts that are securely fastened to the exterior of the house.

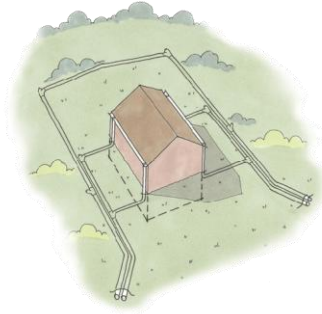
Finally, downspouts should not terminate close to the foundation. This is a common mistake that installers and homeowners make. What's the use of having a complete gutter system that dumps all the water from the roof at the side of the foundation? What's needed is a minimum of five-foot diversion away from the foundation. In many cases a section of downspout can be attached at the end of the elbow.

There are several products out there that claim to be maintenance-free such as leaf guards that keep gutters clean. Some of these products are effective and some actually create problems. The products available are either metal mesh or sheet metal gutter covers. In some applications these products can tend to dam leaves on the roof that can cause damage to roof decking and eaves. Some of the sheet metal gutter covers and leaf guards products don't actually work in a heavy rain. Yes, leaves and debris won't be in your gutter, but water won't go into the gutter either. Before buying any of these products do some homework and read reviews of these products online. In some cases good old fashion gutter cleaning may be a better option.

The home is one of the largest investments anyone will make in their lifetime and maintaining that investment makes common sense and one of those maintenance issues is controlling water from your roof and around your home.

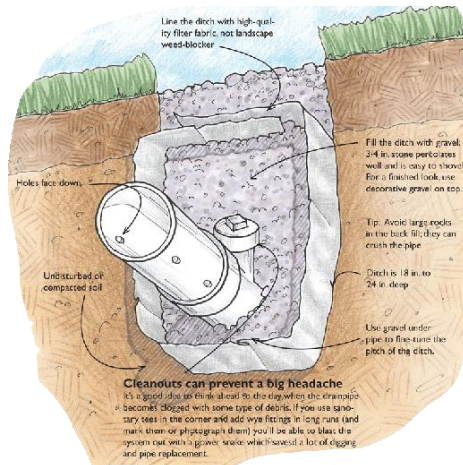
Storm Water Management

Since we're on the topic of controlling rain water in this issue, let's talk about controlling that water around the home by having the right drainage that can keep the house dry and the landscape green.



Site drainage needs to be kept separate from gutter runoff and from the perimeter foundation drain pipes which can become overloaded and cause flooding.

There are two things to think about in keeping a site dry: water coming off the roof; and rain soaking into everything else that's at site level or higher. Consequently there are three drainage systems — one for gutters, one for the foundation and one to keep the immediate area clear. In small yards or those that are not configured for a rain garden or drywell, getting gutter runoff "to daylight" is an absolute minimum. This means that gutter drainpipes are terminated above-ground to let them empty above ground. Many local codes specify at least five feet away from the house without also specifying "and downhill." Avoid runoff in the streets, recharge the ground water. As land gets developed, rainfall is increasingly diverted from ground storage and directed to storm drains. This further depletes ground water supplies, overtaxes city sewer systems, and dumps lawn fertilizers, pesticides, and pollution from streets into rivers, lakes, and oceans.



Silt clogs drains and very heavy rainstorm will carry silt into a curtain drain trench, clogging the spaces between pieces of crushed stone. Filter fabric around the drain rock will extend the curtain drain's useful life by holding back most of the silt.

Keep the foundation dry by keeping water away from the house but retained on-site. Different types of drains incorporated in to the landscape and house can carry bulk water away from a house to keep it dry. A curtain drain is like a gravel-filled moat that protects a house from ground water. These are a good solution for houses with hills behind them that

constantly keep the basement damp. Inside the moat is a perforated pipe. When water comes down the hill just below the surface, it runs into the gravel, fills up the pipe and is carried away to daylight, drywell, or rain garden.

Rigid PVC drainpipe (top) is crush-resistant but a little harder to work with than flexible pipe (bottom). PVC comes in 10-foot lengths, is crush-resistant to 3,000 pounds, and costs about \$0.65 per foot. Flexible plastic comes in long rolls, but big rocks can crush it during backfill. Cost: \$0.40 per ft and a little more if a filter cloth like sock is installed around the pipe.



Choose materials well such as $\frac{3}{4}$ inch gravel which percolates well and is easy to shovel. For a finished look, top with decorative gravel. Solid PVC drain pipe is best; black flexible pipe is easiest and least expensive. Avoid generic landscape-type weed-blocking fabrics; they won't last. Instead, choose high-quality landscape filter fabric such as Tytar.

A curtain drain or other stormwater diversion doesn't have to be an eyesore. Make them focal points, or even integrate them into other garden features. Paving and drainage choices need equal consideration. It's an integrated issue because the paving material has to work with the building and landscape design, and may need to be coordinated with the interior design as well. Paving has green building implications in two areas: First, production effects (whether it an environmentally preferable material, e.g., recycled content, salvaged, etc.); and second, performance effects such as heat island (the reflectivity/emissivity of the material) and stormwater absorption/retention (the permeability of the material).

Industry News

New BC Builder Requirements

The Professional Builders' Institute (PBI) has been established to raise the bar of professionalism in the residential construction industry and protect consumers in British Columbia.

To find out more, please read the news release entitled [New Institute To Protect Homebuyers Across Province](#) which was issued today by Minister Rich Coleman, Minister of Housing and Social Development.

BC Mortgage Rate Forecast

BC Real Estate Association mortgage rate forecast says that while mortgage rates may trend lower in the near-term as financial markets digest the current economic environment, rates will ultimately resume their climb upward by the end of the year.

2010 Housing Outlook Conference Coming To Vancouver On November 10th

CMHC annual Housing Outlook Conferences provide access to timely, reliable and unbiased housing market information and forecasts. Tailored to the specifics of the local market, they may also enable you to earn education credits. An Outlook Conference will be held in Vancouver on November 10th.

Five Concepts For Kitchen Layout

Fine Homebuilding article by designer and builder Sam Clark shares 5 key concepts to help you find the best configuration for cabinets, counters and appliances.

9 Examples Of Outdoor Spaces

HGTV Pro online slide show describes examples of outdoor spaces.

Changes To BC Building Code Letters Of Assurance

BC Building and Safety Standards Branch describes changes to Building Code Letters of

Assurance, that have been made to help code oversight requirements keep pace with evolutions in construction practices and new code requirements for energy and water efficiency. (PDF)

Resource Site For Tamper Resistant Receptacles

Sponsored by the Electrical Equipment Manufacturers Association of Canada, four electrical industry players have launched a website in response to recent concerns over electrical receptacle-related injuries. The Child Safety Outlet website offers information on tamper-resistant receptacles and child safety, as well as providing information on products, emerging provincial code requirements, safety education, and statistics.

Groundwater Control

Building Science describes how to best design and build water managed foundation systems.

Preventing Moisture Problems In Bathrooms

Fine Homebuilding article describes strategies for controlling moisture in a bathroom, including both airborne water vapor and splashes from tubs, showers, toilets, and sinks. It includes construction details and recommendations for materials and designs that will help keep water in its place.

Green Renovation Checklist For Built Green

Built Green Canada provides Green Renovation Checklist that contains more than 290 Action Items to choose from and functions as a menu of environmentally friendly Action Items to include in your renovation project. (Excel)

Tapes & Gaskets For Air-Sealing

Green Building Advisor describes the best tapes, caulks, or gaskets for most weatherization and air-sealing jobs.

How To Remove Stains On Concrete Countertops

Concrete Network describes how to remove stains from concrete countertops.

Fun Stuff

Monkey Go Happy

This is dumb! It doesn't even give you any directions on how to play each part of the game...and therein lies the challenge. But believe me, if you're stubborn enough, you will eventually figure them out...maybe!

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Editor: Dave Brice CHI **Email:** inspector@bchomeinspections.ca **Cell:** 250 833-8955

President - Pacific West Home Inspections

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