



The Professional Inspector

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

Home Owner Embarrassment

I found this article on ActiveRain’s Website which was posted by Mr. Richard Straham who is a professional Realtor with Remax Realty Group in Harleysville, PA. When I read this, I thought I was the only one that had experienced such an incident which occurred over eight years ago when I was inspecting a home for a client. Anyway, here is the article, enjoy a good laugh.

We've all walked into homes that we thought were unoccupied, only to be surprised by the people inside. But some cases are more memorable than others!

I have a routine when with my buyers. When we get to the front door, I ring the bell. Then I either use the door knocker or rap on the door just in case the bell doesn't work. THEN I open the lock box. When opening the front door, I give a friendly, but bellowing, "Hello! Realtor!!" And sometimes, before I'm able to get the key out of the box, the door opens. Even though we expected the house to be unoccupied. Always best to knock and ring. And bellow.

So, I'm with some clients, and I do my knock and ring routine. Getting no answer I open the lock box and then open the front door. And bellow. We tour the first floor, taking our time. I lead the way to the second floor. When I reach the top, out pops a man from the bedroom (the homeowner, I'm guessing), tucking his shirt into his open, un-zipped pants! He's doing this while apologizing that he was running a bit late. Caught off guard, I stammer, "Would you like us to come back later?" But by this time he's made himself presentable and says that he was just on his way out. He rushes down the stairs and is out the door in a flash. My clients and I have a short, "Wasn't that strange" moment and continue the tour. We enter the master bedroom. My clients are now in front of me, and they go to the dressing room, and enter the master bath. I hear two cries of disgust and see Mrs. Buyer literally stumble backwards out of the bathroom. She is now the color of a Staff Sargent's tunic. "Oh," she says, "it smells bad in there." Both buyers have now retreated to a far corner of the master suite.

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Well, I'm known for finding the silver lining in just about anything. And a little odor never stopped me. So I march into the bathroom. Yes, it did have a wonderful cathedral ceiling. And a beautiful jetted tub. The millwork was lovely. But the stench was overpowering! My eyes started to tear up. I have a perfect track record of never throwing up in front of a client, and I'm not about to blow it, so I retreat to the bedroom with my clients. Just by the look on their faces, I can see that any shot this house ever had of being their next home has gone down the toilet.

Mr. Seller - I have no idea whether the anxiety of selling your home has caused your bowels to knot up, or perhaps you just had a really bad burrito. And it must have been a broccoli, gorgonzola and cabbage burrito that had been sitting in the sun for a few days. Because seriously, dude, if that doesn't clear up soon, you need to see a gastroenterologist pronto! I understand that nature doesn't always follow a Realtor's schedule. And it must have been mortifying sitting on the pot while I knocked, rang and yelled (although you didn't seem mortified as you casually put yourself back together in the hallway!). But next time, please make sure you have an industrial can of air freshener next to the toilet for just such an occasion!

Why The Home Inspection Takes So Long

Ah yes, I have heard this so many times over the years "What? Its going to take how long to do the home inspection? 4 to 6 hours!! Are you serious". You bet I'm serious. That is typically the average time when I perform a thorough home inspection on an average residential home, sometimes a lot longer depending on square footage of the home, extra suite, several additional mechanical systems and specialty systems. Any time less then 2 to 3 hours is a red flag that you're not receiving what is expected from a experienced, Certified home inspector. I know of several newer home inspectors that have popped up within the past year or two advertising with many years experience, some even saying 20+ years experience which in fact have little to no experience in the building inspection industry and have found several to be working towards their registered status (associate needing 200+ home inspections to be a fully Registered Home Inspector RHI). That in my opinion and others is wrong and not truthful towards the home buyer.

Finding and referring an experienced home inspector is very important for your client and there are only a few in the home inspection industry. Here is what one professional Realtor from Vancouver had to say.

Vancouver Real Estate Agent
January 10, 2010

I certainly understand everyone's concerns. Something to keep in mind is that we only hear about the "bad ones"... the inspections that go wrong & the inspectors that do their jobs poorly. I urge you all to keep in mind that inspections are a critical aspect of the home buying process & finding a qualified inspector/company is absolutely essential (especially when you are paying so much for a property in this city).

I know us Realtors have a bad rep sometimes, but I can tell you that I and all of the Realtors that I network with have one thing in mind... our clients' best interests. Why would I want to pressure an inspector into neglecting problem areas of a home just to complete a deal? There are many homes out there to move on to & at the end of the day; we do better business when we get referrals from our HAPPY customers. Now, obviously we cannot foresee all of the potential issues our clients may face once they purchase a property, but our job is to inform our clients to the best of our ability ~ and that's what I do.

I imagine that reputation is often just as critical for inspection companies... so yes, someone who works for a company (not just for themselves) may be the way to go, however there are a number of great independent inspectors too. Do your homework... find out how long the inspector has been doing their job or working with their company & ask for client referrals (and contact them).

As people have mentioned, inspections cannot be intrusive... (How can they be if the buyer doesn't own the home yet?)... There is simply always a risk in this respect when it comes to buying a home.

Anyway, I always recommend PROFESSIONAL inspections to my clients (and I know most of my peers do as well). If there is something wrong with the home that my client is not anticipating, I want them to know about it so they can make an informed decision. (Also, I have worked with a number of "home savvy" buyers that reluctantly chose to get professional home inspections, and they soon after admitted that they learned a few things. (Good) Home inspectors these days don't only tell you the problems with a home, but what your options are to improve a relatively problem-free house.) I think this article is important because it does bring to light some of the problems in the industry. It is also critical that buyers are aware that inspectors are (in most cases) not liable for financially compensating buyers when things go sour.

So, do your homework folks... but definitely get your home inspections when considering buying a property.

Fall 2010 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 Vernon during September 10-12.
- In Kelowna during September 17-19.
- In Penticton during October 1-3.
- 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.

Buyers Three Points

I know that inspections can be confusing for a buyer. It's hard to look at a 30 page report of blemishes and not be overwhelmed. It is even harder when a contract is written on a home being sold 'as is'. I try to help my buyers avoid this confusion by sharing the following three points during our very first meeting.

1. An inspection is really a 'honey-do list' from your new home to you. It is all of those little pesky things that should be fixed, straightened or revamped. It is NOT the list of all the things the seller must do before leaving and it just isn't reasonable to expect that.
2. Instead, think of the inspection as a chance, whether 'As Is' or not, to have your MAJOR concerns addressed. We can demand that they be repaired, that you be compensated for having them repaired or just that you be reassured that they are not going to cause you a headache down the road.
3. When buying a bank-owned or other 'As Is' house, this means that you are taking it 'warts and all'. It doesn't mean that you accept the rotted roof or sparking electrical lines. Those things that are fundamental to the structure or their health and safety are ALWAYS negotiable and worthy of demanding a repair or walking away.

I learned this little tidbit of framing from a friend and I love it. It takes the confusion out of the inspection process and sets your buyer up for being open in their expectation of the inspection and inspection demand process.

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Roofing Over A Existing Roof Covering**Are you serious or are you insane?**

I hear it all the time after inspecting a home where new roofing material has been installed by the homeowner, or worse, by a roofing contractor has been applied to the surface of the old roofing material, why? Why would anyone cover up old, deteriorated, damaged, roof covering material after spending all that time and money? Worse yet, what are the current conditions of the underlayment and plywood sheathing that has been covered up?

The only reason one replaces the roof covering material is that the life expectancy of the roofing material has diminished and expired its intended use and that water and snowmelt is penetrating underside of the roofing material and seeping into areas of the attic or vaulted ceiling or worse, into the interior living spaces of the home.

If your roof is leaky or not, you may have structural damage from water that may have seeped underside of the roofing material. Adding a new layer over this will seal in the problem and may make the situation worse. Not only that, by adding a second layer or more of roofing material over top, you are adding additional undetermined loads to the roofs structure of the trusses which were only designed and constructed for loads with one layer of roofing material as intended.

As a previous professional building contractor, I have been witness to what happens when a second or more layer of roofing material is applied to the existing roof material. For instance, many years ago, a client of mine contacted me in complaining that his new roof was leaking and there was a very slight sag at one side of the roof approximately half way up the surface of the roof. He informed me that a roofing company overlaid the new metal roofing material over top of the older asphalt shingles. He, the homeowner, questioned this method to the roofer if this method is a normal practice to install the new metal roofing material over top of the old and would there be any future problems in which the roofer informed him that there would not and that it is a normal standard of practice in the roofing industry to do as such.

Well, after hearing this from the homeowner, I informed him that is one of the worst things that can be done in roof covering replacement. I asked the homeowner, what assurance did he get from the roofer that the underlayment, plywood sheathing and flashings were in good conditions and that there was no wood rot deterioration and damage of materials. Further, was there any indications of past or present water seepage into the attic and did he inspect the conditions of the top sections of the trusses for any damaged or deteriorated wood members?

The answer from the homeowner was obvious with a resounding no!

After further discussions with the homeowner and informing him that there is likely damage and deterioration covered up of the plywood sheathing membrane and deterioration of the underlayment and will only be known once both layers of the roofing material is removed, I was given the go ahead to further investigate what has been covered up.

Once the metal roofing material and old asphalt shingles were removed, the underlayment was discovered to be damp at several locations along with various degree's of deterioration and damage and was not effective at all as a line of defense for preventing water from penetrating to the underside of the underlayment to the surface of the plywood sheathing.

Once the underlayment was removed from the surface of the plywood sheathing and all metal and rubber flashing materials, the plywood sheathing at various locations was damp and wet along with various areas exhibiting various degrees of wood rot and some areas of mold growth development. Worse areas of the plywood sheathing were around the skylights, plumbing air vents, bathroom vent covers, chimney and roof air vents, all having extreme wood rot and where the most likely areas of water seepage entry into the attic.

Once the plywood sheathing was removed, the top of the truss cords were stained at various locations even with some exhibiting wood rot.

Before extensive repairs were undertaken, I showed the homeowner what was hidden from view and literate on my statement that new roofing material applied over top of old roofing material is the worse thing one can do to their roof before stripping the old roofing material to the plywood sheathing before reroofing is performed.

On a note, the homeowner contacted the roofing company to see what had been uncovered but insisted that there was nothing wrong in what he did and what has been presently been found had must of occurred within a few short years. When the homeowner told me that, I laughed as this was a long-term issue and that is why he was installing the metal roofing material on top of the old in the first place because your roof was leaking. So if it was, would one not think what the present conditions of the underlayment and plywood sheathing would be if water were seeping underneath and into the attic? What a lame excuse by the roofer!

Anyway, needless to say, because water was seeping into the attic onto the top of the insulation, a good portion of the insulation within the attic had to be replaced. Several of the truss's top cords had to be replaced and treated with an anti-fungal product to prevent mold growth. New plywood sheathing was added with H-clips which were not installed between the plywood sheathing ends and underlayment was laid on the entire surface of the roof fully fastened and all seams sealed. In addition, all new flashings were installed where needed and as an extra cautionary measure that represents a better building practice and is not required by building code, metal flashing was installed along the entire edge of the roof to protect the exposed ends of the plywood sheathing. Further to this, flashing caps were installed along both sides of the roof gable ends to prevent wind driven rain and snow from entering underside the shingles. With only one layer of roofing material installed, we removed the extra weight from the roof trusses which they were originally designed and constructed as intended for one layer. As an extra note to this, a few of the top cords were warped and had slight breaks which were later identified to have been caused by the extra loads of the second layer of roofing material and by recommendation of a professional engineer I obtained to inspect all of the trusses, I had to reinforce several of the top truss cords to his requirements.

After all was said and done, the homeowner could not believe how the roof looked which was very different from what the previous roofing contractor did. He indicated that the workmanship and attention to detail was impressive and that the little extras that go beyond the normal roofing standards and practice would protect an expensive investment and prevent any water seepage problems. Further, I gave the homeowner a warranty and guarantee of materials and workmanship as long as a regular maintenance schedule was adhered to twice yearly. Yes, you heard me right. Just because a new roof covering and other related roofing components have been installed newly does not mean that regular maintenance and upkeep does not have to be included on a yearly basis, that's part of homeownership which is the sole responsibility of the homeowner. I gave the homeowner a schedule and that as long as the maintenance was performed, I can backup my guarantee of workmanship.

In conclusion, I have seen it all with every roof I had to redo that had been layered over by one or more roof coverings. It has always been the same, the roofer would say that it is a standard practice and is ok to do so. Well, these roofers never get to see the aftermath of their stupidity and lack of knowledgeable building science and what the consequences will be within a few years as they never ever see what happens several years later when the homeowner notices problems.

As the surest way of knowing, the safest thing to do is to have the roof stripped so that it can be examined for potential structural problems and what the conditions are before resurfacing it and to be sure that you are acquiring a professional roofer that knows what he is doing.

Like I always said to my clients back then, Do It Right – Make It Right

Industry News**Wildfire! Preventing Home Ignitions**

This program is based on the research of Jack Cohen, U. S. Forest Service, Research Physical Scientist, at the Fire Sciences Laboratory of the USDA Forest Service in Missoula, MT. The program discusses how the combustion process effects forest fires, what you can do to create survivable space, why some homes are destroyed while others survive, how to identify your home's Ignition Zone -- the area that includes the home and its immediate surroundings, which, if properly conditioned, can save the home during a wildfire.

See a [video](#) here

Website: www.firewise.org

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ACP Ideas offers online tool for estimating tile & grid materials needed for various types of drop-ceilings. [Click Here](#)

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