



**ATEX INSPECTS, LLC - ROBERT WELCH, PRI**  
**PROFESSIONAL REAL ESTATE INSPECTIONS**

**281-216-1171**

**TREC LICENSE # 9292**

**[robert@atexinspects.com](mailto:robert@atexinspects.com)**

**[www.atexinspects.com](http://www.atexinspects.com)**



**ALL REFERENCES TO THE PROPERTY ARE ORIENTATED AS ONE  
WOULD FACE THE FRONT DOOR**

**INSPECTION DATE**

**Thursday, August 5, 2021**

**CLIENT'S NAME**

**Triple Points, LLC**

**PROPERTY ADDRESS**

**5407 Cranston Ct, Sugar Land TX 77479**

**REPORT IDENTIFICATION**

**8521**

**ATEX INSPECTS, LLC**

**RECEIPT**

**YOUR HOUSTON HOME & COMMERCIAL INSPECTOR**

**Robert Welch, PRI**

**TREC Licenses Number 9292**

**Phone (281)-216-1171**

Real Estate Inspection Receipt For:

Triple Points, LLC

5407 Cranston Ct, Sugar Land TX 77479

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>August 5, 2021</b>
<b>INVOICE #</b>	<b>8521</b>
<b>FOR:</b>	<b>REAL ESTATE INSPECTION</b>

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
<b>REAL ESTATE INSPECTION AT:</b> 5407 Cranston Ct, Sugar Land TX 77479	<b>\$ 375.00</b>
<b>PAID IN FULL</b> Thank You For Your Business	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 375.00</b>

**If you have any questions concerning your inspection, please contact:**

**Robert Welch, PRI**

**(281) 216-1171**

[robert@atexinspects.com](mailto:robert@atexinspects.com)

[www.atexinspects.com](http://www.atexinspects.com)

**THE GREATEST COMPLIMENT A CLIENT CAN GIVE  
IS THE REFERRAL OF OUR SERVICES  
TO A FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBER OR BUSINESS ASSOCIATE  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS!**

# PROPERTY INSPECTION REPORT

REPORT IDENTIFICATION

8521

Prepared For: Triple Points, LLC  
(Name of Client)

Concerning: 5407 Cranston Ct, Sugar Land TX 77479  
(Address or Other Identification of Inspected Property)

By: ROBERT WELCH TREC # 9292 | 8/5/2021 22:21  
(Name and License Number of Inspector) (Date)

## PURPOSE, LIMITATIONS AND INSPECTOR / CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Year Built -	<u>2000</u>	Property Type -	<u>Single Family</u>
Sq Footage -	<u>2724</u>	Design -	<u>One Story</u>
		Orientation -	<u>Northwest</u>
Weather -	<u>Partly Cloudy</u>		
Temperature -	<u>90 Degrees</u>	Utilities -	<u>All On</u>
Attending -	<u>Seller</u>	Occupied -	<u>Yes</u>
	<u>                    </u>		
	<u>                    </u>		

This property inspection report may include an inspection agreement (contract), addenda, and other information related to property conditions. If any item or comment is unclear, you should ask the inspector to clarify the findings. It is important that you carefully read ALL of this information.

This inspection is subject to the rules ("Rules") of the Texas Real Estate Commission ("TREC"), which can be found at: [www.trec.texas.gov](http://www.trec.texas.gov).

The TREC Standards of Practice (Sections 535.227-535.233 of the Rules) are the minimum standards for inspections by TREC-licensed inspectors. An inspection addresses only those components and conditions that are present, visible, and accessible at the time of the inspection. While there may be other parts, components or systems present, only those items specifically noted as being inspected were inspected. The inspector is NOT required to turn on decommissioned equipment, systems, utility services or apply an open flame or light a pilot to operate any appliance. The inspector is NOT required to climb over obstacles, move furnishings or stored items. The inspection report may address issues that are code-based or may refer to a particular code; however, this is NOT a code compliance inspection and does NOT verify compliance with manufacturer's installation instructions. The inspection does NOT imply insurability or warrantability of the structure or its components. Although some safety issues may be addressed in this report, this inspection is NOT a safety/code inspection, and the inspector is NOT required to identify all potential hazards.

In this report, the inspector shall indicate, by checking the appropriate boxes on the form, whether each item was inspected, not inspected, not present or d and explain the findings in the corresponding section in the body of the report form. The must check the Deficient (D) box if a condition exists that adversely and materially affects the performance of a system or

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(512) 936-3000 (<http://www.trec.texas.gov>).

REI 7-5 (5/4/2015)

component or constitutes a hazard to life, limb or property as specified by the TREC Standards of Practice. General deficiencies include inoperability, material distress, water penetration, damage, deterioration, missing components, and unsuitable installation. Comments may be provided by the inspector whether or not an item is deemed deficient. The inspector is not required to prioritize or emphasize the importance of one deficiency over another.

Some items reported as Deficient may be considered life-safety upgrades to the property. For more information, refer to Texas Real Estate Consumer Notice Concerning Recognized Hazards or Deficiencies below.

THIS PROPERTY INSPECTION IS NOT A TECHNICALLY EXHAUSTIVE INSPECTION OF THE STRUCTURE, SYSTEMS OR COMPONENTS. The inspection may not reveal all deficiencies. A real estate inspection helps to reduce some of the risk involved in purchasing a home, but it cannot eliminate these risks, nor can the inspection anticipate future events or changes in performance due to changes in use or occupancy. It is recommended that you obtain as much information as is available about this property, including any seller's disclosures, previous inspection reports, engineering reports, building/remodeling permits, and reports performed for or by relocation companies, municipal inspection departments, lenders, insurers, and appraisers. You should also attempt to determine whether repairs, renovation, remodeling, additions, or other such activities have taken place at this property. It is not the inspector's responsibility to confirm that information obtained from these sources is complete or accurate or that this inspection is consistent with the opinions expressed in previous or future reports.

ITEMS IDENTIFIED IN THE REPORT DO NOT OBLIGATE ANY PARTY TO MAKE REPAIRS OR TAKE OTHER ACTIONS, NOR IS THE PURCHASER REQUIRED TO REQUEST THAT THE SELLER TAKE ANY ACTION. When a deficiency is reported, it is the client's responsibility to obtain further evaluations and/or cost estimates from qualified service professionals. Any such follow-up should take place prior to the expiration of any time limitations such as option periods.

Evaluations by qualified tradesmen may lead to the discovery of additional deficiencies which may involve additional repair costs. Failure to address deficiencies or comments noted in this report may lead to further damage of the structure or systems and add to the original repair costs. The inspector is not required to provide follow-up services to verify that proper repairs have been made.

Property conditions change with time and use. For example, mechanical devices can fail at any time, plumbing gaskets and seals may crack if the appliance or plumbing fixture is not used often, roof leaks can occur at any time regardless of the apparent condition of the roof, and the performance of the structure and the systems may change due to changes in use or occupancy, effects of weather, etc. These changes or repairs made to the structure after the inspection may render information contained herein obsolete or invalid. This report is provided for the specific benefit of the client named above and is based on observations at the time of the inspection. If you did not hire the inspector yourself, reliance of this report may provide incomplete or outdated information. Repairs, professional opinions or additional inspection reports may affect the meaning of the information in this report. It is recommended that you hire a licensed inspector to perform an inspection to meet your specific needs and to provide you with current information concerning this property.

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**REI 7-5 (5/4/2015)**

**TEXAS REAL ESTATE CONSUMER NOTICE CONCERNING HAZARDS OR DEFICIENCIES**

Each year, Texans sustain property damage and are injured by accidents in the home. While some accidents may not be avoidable, many other accidents, injuries, and deaths may be avoided through the identification and repair of certain hazardous conditions. Examples of such hazards include:

- malfunctioning, improperly installed, or missing ground fault circuit protection (GFCI) devices for electrical receptacles in garages, bathrooms, kitchens, and exterior areas;
- malfunctioning arc fault protection (AFCI) devices;
- ordinary glass in locations where modern construction techniques call for safety glass;
- malfunctioning or lack of fire safety features such as smoke alarms, fire-rated doors in certain locations, and functional emergency escape and rescue openings in bedrooms;
- malfunctioning carbon monoxide alarms;
- excessive spacing between balusters on stairways and porches;
- improperly installed appliances;
- improperly installed or defective safety devices; and
- lack of electrical bonding and grounding.
- lack of bonding on gas piping, including corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST)

To ensure that consumers are informed of hazards such as these, the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) has adopted Standards of Practice requiring licensed inspectors to report these conditions as "Deficient" when performing an inspection for a buyer or seller, if they can be reasonably determined.

These conditions may not have violated building codes or common practices at the time of the construction of the home, or they may have been "grandfathered" because they were present prior to the adoption of codes prohibiting such conditions. While the TREC Standards of Practice do not require inspectors to perform a code compliance inspection, TREC considers the potential for injury or property loss from the hazards addressed in the Standards of Practice to be significant enough to warrant this notice.

Contract forms developed by TREC for use by its real estate licensees also inform the buyer of the right to have the home inspected and can provide an option clause permitting the buyer to terminate the contract within a specified time. Neither the Standards of Practice nor the TREC contract forms require a seller to remedy conditions revealed by an inspection. The decision to correct a hazard or any deficiency identified in an inspection report is left to the parties to the contract for the sale or purchase of the home.

**INFORMATION INCLUDED UNDER "ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY INSPECTOR", OR PROVIDED AS AN ATTACHMENT WITH THE STANDARD FORM, IS NOT REQUIRED BY THE COMMISSION AND MAY CONTAIN CONTRACTUAL TERMS BETWEEN THE INSPECTOR AND YOU, AS THE CLIENT. THE COMMISSION DOES NOT REGULATE CONTRACTUAL TERMS BETWEEN PARTIES. IF YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE EFFECT OF ANY CONTRACTUAL TERM CONTAINED IN THIS SECTION OR ANY ATTACHMENTS, CONSULT AN ATTORNEY.**

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY INSPECTOR**

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**REI 7-5 (5/4/2015)**

## REAL ESTATE INSPECTION DISCLAIMER

REPORT IDENTIFICATION

8521

### Important: You Must Read All of this Report:

Additional pages may be attached to this report. Read them very carefully. This report may not be complete without the attachments. If an item is present in the property but is not inspected, the "NI" column will be checked with an explanation if necessary. Comments may be provided by the inspector whether or not an item is deemed in need of repair.

***This report shall supersede any written or verbal conversations, comments and or reports that were provided prior to providing this written report.***

### Scope of Inspection:

THE SCOPE OF THIS INSPECTION IS TO REPORT THE GENERAL CONDITION OF THE VISIBLE PORTIONS OF PRIMARY BUILDINGS ON THE PROPERTY AND TO INFORM THE "CLIENT" OF VISIBLE DEFICIENCIES THE INSPECTOR DEEMS TO BE IN NEED OF REPAIR AS THEY EXIST ON THE DATE OF THE INSPECTION.

THE INSPECTION AND REPORT THEREON IS NOT A WARRANTY, GUARANTEE, INSURANCE POLICY OR SUBSTITUTE FOR ANY DISCLOSURE STATEMENT WHETHER OR NOT IT IS REQUIRED BY LAW.

The inspection will be performed in accordance with the Standards of Practice set forth by the Texas Real Estate Commission. Copies of these standards will be provided upon request.

The inspection to be performed is a visual inspection only and does not contemplate or involve the dismantling or moving of and object or portion of the premises. Latent and concealed defects and deficiencies are excluded from the inspection.

No representation is made as to how long any equipment will continue to function. The "Client" should be aware that any equipment, even new equipment, can fail at any time, including the day following the inspection. This inspection is limited to the real property and does not include personal property unless so indicated in this inspection report.

The content of this report is based solely upon "eyeball" observations of apparent performance. Opinions have been formed from the inspector's personal knowledge and experience and not upon any code requirements and/or performance standards. Compliance with any federal, state or local codes and/or requirements is not within the scope or intent of this report.

### The Following Are Outside The Scope Of This Inspection:

1. Detached ancillary buildings (with the exception of the parking structures)
2. Conditions that are located in concealed or inaccessible portions of the premises, such as items that are underground or contained within fixtures, walls, or within other closed portions of the building, or concealed by furnishings, personal property or vegetation.
3. Termites, dry rot, fungus, other pests, organisms, or rodents. By law, only a licensed pest control operator can inspect for these conditions.
4. Structural, geological, and hydrological stability or soils conditions; wave action reporting; any form of engineering analysis. Note: Only licensed engineers can conduct such evaluations.
5. Technically complex systems or devices such self cleaning ovens, heat exchangers, radiant heating or components, alarm systems, fire detection systems, solar systems, air quality control systems, radio or computer controlled devices, automatic timer controls, elevators and dumbwaiters; satellite dishes.
6. Low voltage electrical systems, including but not limited to TV antenna, TV signal cables, telephones, intercoms systems, security & radio speaker wires, automated equipment, landscape lighting.
7. Easements, right of way, boundaries, condition of title, zoning, previous use or occupancy determination, verification that existing structures and/or repairs were completed in accordance with local code requirements or that they were completed with a building permit, requirements of Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.)
8. Environmental hazards, including but not limited to, asbestos, lead, radon gas, formaldehyde, electro-magnetic fields, underground storage tanks, PCB's or other toxins.
9. Notification of product recalls.
10. Private water quality test or related equipment, such as sewage pumps, water softeners, water purifications systems.
11. Building or property measurement and value appraisal: determination of life expectancy; cost estimates for corrective or repair work.

12. Unique systems with which the "INSPECTOR" is unfamiliar or any component that is specifically listed as not inspected on the inspection report, to include systems that require specialty licenses or certifications. to be able to legally inspection or otherwise certify functional capacity, such as elevators.

**Confidentiality of Report:**

The inspection report is for the exclusive private use of the "CLIENT". This report is confidential and is not to be copied or disseminated to any other party without the expressed consent of the "CLIENT". Use of all disclosures contained in the report is specifically restricted to the transaction for which the inspection was performed. Use of/or reliance upon the report by other parties, or for other transactions, is strictly prohibited.

**Limits of the Inspection:**

Client understands that the "INSPECTOR" is a generalist, that the "GENERALIST" type of inspection and report is an UNBIASED OPINION BASED UPON the experience of the individual "GENERALIST" "INSPECTOR", and that the inspector is not an EXPERT IN ANY CRAFT OR PROFESSION. "CLIENT" AGREES TO ASSUME ALL THE RISK FOR CONDITIONS WHICH ARE CONCEALED FROM VIEW OR INACCESSIBLE BY THE "INSPECTOR" AT THE INSPECTION.

**Additional Information:**

Re-Inspections or "How do I know if they really fixed this?"  
ATEX Inspects, LLC per the regulations outlined by the State of Texas does not perform re-inspection or follow-up inspections to confirm that repairs have been performed correctly. A licensed, certified contractor should be consulted to perform a repair inspection to confirm that the all repairs in question have been performed within acceptable building codes and practices.

**A word about Repair Companies:**

You should only use reputable, competent and qualified contractors to repair any item on the report that is listed as in need of repair. Some repairs such as the ones to electrical, plumbing or HVAC systems will require a licensed professional. Under no circumstances should an unlicensed professional be used to make repairs in these areas. If the "Specialist" you or the seller chose to make the repairs has to call us to ask how to make a repair or repairs on an item listed in the report, chances are very good they are not qualified and make these repairs, find another professional who is. Any qualified professional will know how to find and make repairs listed in this report. Per state regulations the "INSPECTOR" is not allowed to tell the contractor how a repair should be performed. This report is not complete without the cover page, the disclaimer page, the TREC page, additional report pages and any attachments.

**Intent of The Inspection:**

It is the expressed intent and purpose of this report to inform you the "CLIENT" exclusively of the visual ("eyeball") observations and opinions made on the day of the inspection as to whether or not the structure, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical components of the subject property are performing the function for which they were intended to perform or are in need of immediate repairs. It is not within the intent and/or scope of this report to determine the insurability, habitability, suitability of use, economic life span, deferred maintenance issues , and/or issues unnamed in this report.  
This report is neither an expressed nor implied warranty and / or guarantee as to future life and/or performance of the items inspected, but is intended to express the inspector's perceived impression of the apparent performance of the structure, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical components viewed on the date of the inspection. Our intent is to reduce your risk associated with this transaction, however we cannot eliminate all risk nor assume your risk.

### **Method of the Inspection:**

The inspection methodology has not been of a formal engineered type of inspection; therefore, no soil, physical or geological testing or inspections were performed. Many of the structural, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical components were judged indirectly by the visible condition of the surfaces and/or components open to view. Observations were made both inside as well as outside of the structure; however, these observations were limited to only those areas open to view without moving any item, i.e.; inhabitants furniture, vegetation, belongings or stored items which was blocking the view.

The inspector did not employ any instruments to aid in the inspection, disassemble any component of an item checked, (i.e.: disassemble a heating unit to inspect for a cracked heat exchanger), conduct extensive destructive testing, calculations, or removal of wall and floor covering unless noted in the body of this report.

### **Limitations of the Inspection:**

The visual inspection method employed will generally produce a competent first impression assessment of the apparent past structural, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical components, provided refurbishing repairs have not been performed which would mask distress patterns normally produce by structural, electrical, plumbing and mechanical components problems.

Because the inspection procedure is visual only and was not intended to be diagnostic and/or technically exhaustive, an inherent residual risk remains that undiscovered problems exist and/or future problems will develop.

There is no guarantee or warranty stated or implied that all defects have been found or that ATEX Inspects d/b/a ATEX Inspects will pay for the repair of any defect not discovered. The content of this report should be considered as an opinion of apparent performance of the items inspected and not engineering fact. THIS INSPECTION DOES NOT INCLUDE THE INSPECTION OF, SAMPLING FOR OR TESTING OF ANY SUBSTANCE CLASSIFIED OR OTHERWISE IDENTIFIED WITH OR AS A TOXIC SUBSTANCE AND/OR BIO-HAZARD OR WOOD DESTROYING INSECTS/ORGANISMS.

Client Advisory: No moisture, mold and /or indoor air quality (IAQ) tests were performed, The inspector is not qualified / certified for such evaluations / studies. The client should be aware that various fungi, molds and mildew flourish in such an environment provided by water intrusion events, excessively moist conditions and / or water damaged conditions. A growing concern to date includes the adverse effect on indoor air quality and the potential for inherent health hazards. If concerned the client is advised to contact a qualified IAQ Professional for further evaluations of this property.

### **ATEX Inspects' Expert Testimony / Litigation and Financial Compensation Clause:**

ATEX Inspects, LLC does not perform paid or "For Hire" expert testimony or advise in any type of litigation case. This clause includes all types of disputes such as, buyer vs. owner, buyer vs. real estate companies or agents, buyers or owners vs. builders or contractors, renters (tenants) vs. landlords, property managers or owners.

### **LIMITED LIABILITY OF THE INSPECTION & ITS FINDINGS PERFORMED BY ATEX INSPECTS, LLC REAL ESTATE INSPECTION DISPUTE AND RESOLUTION**

In the event a dispute arises regarding an inspection that has been performed through ATEX Inspects inspection services or under a signed service agreement, Client(s) agree to notify ATEX Inspects within ten (10) days of the time of discovery to give ATEX Inspects a reasonable opportunity to re-inspect the property and resolve the dispute amicably. This provision shall be specifically enforceable and damages for breach of this provision shall include but not limited to court costs and attorney's fees.

**Client agrees that ATEX Inspects, LLC and it's agents liability, if any, shall be limited to the amount of the inspection fee paid for the subject property inspection.**

**This limitation shall apply regardless of the cause of action or the legal theory pled or asserted specifically including, but not limited to, negligence.**

Acceptance and/or reliance on this report shall constitute an acknowledgment, acceptance, and agreement by the Client(s) as well as any spouse / significant other, and/or any assigns to all terms, conditions, exclusions and limitations of this report as well as an acknowledgment that the inspection includes only those items listed as inspected in the inspection report.



<b>Report Identification:</b>	<b>8521</b>
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<b>I= Inspected</b>	<b>NI= Not Inspected</b>	<b>NP= Not Present</b>	<b>D= Deficient</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>NI</b>	<b>NP</b>	<b>D</b>
<b>INSPECTION ITEM</b>			

**I. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS**

**A. Foundations**

**Types of Foundation(s):** Slab on grade - Post Tension

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Overview:**  
 A home's foundation is typically comprised of poured concrete and/or lumber and is often built in a slab or pier and beam configuration. Regardless of its construction, the primary purpose of the foundation is to provide a stable base to support the entire structure of the building and its contents, and to transfer that weight to the ground. Any improper movement of the foundation, especially differential movement, can have a detrimental impact to all the home's structural systems.

**Note:**  
 The foundation performance opinion stated below neither in any way addresses future foundation movement or settlement, nor does it certify floors to be level. Soil in the Houston, Texas area is known to be unstable and unpredictable. Due to the expansive nature of the soil in this area, no warranty against future movement can be made. Should you have present or future concerns regarding the foundation's condition, you are strongly advised to consult with a licensed Professional Structural Engineer for further evaluation.  
 Proper draining is critical to the future performance of the foundation. Trees and shrubs around the foundation can affect soil moisture content and thus the foundation. Experts recommend that trees and shrubs be planted away from foundations, or that good root barriers be installed to prevent roots from getting under the slab. Poor drainage away from slab, or ponding against it, can also affect foundation performance. If for any reason water ponds at any location near the foundation for any extended period of time (24 hours or more) drainage corrections will have to be made.

- Foundation appears satisfactory at the time of inspection - Defects, cracks, etc. may exist, but have no significant impact or are cosmetic.
- Moderate structure settlement noted, but the foundation is supporting the structure at this time. It is impossible to determine how this settlement will affect the support of the structure in the future.
- Significant settlement noted - Suggest that an expert in this field be consulted for further evaluation of the structure and to provide suggestions as to what, if any corrective action should be taken.**

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**B. Grading and Drainage**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Overview:**

Proper grading and drainage is important to maintaining proper foundation performance, preventing water penetration, avoiding wood rot and preventing conditions which are conducive to wood destroying insect intrusion and mold growth.

**Method of Inspection:**

Inspection of the home grading and drainage is done via visual observation of the site around the structure, including surface grade, retaining walls, rain gutters and leaders etc. Any visible conditions or symptoms which may adversely affect the foundation or indicate water penetration are reported. No soil topographical or flood plain studies are performed. It is sometimes impossible to determine proper slope and drainage around the home during dry conditions, a visual observation and opinion is formed by the inspector based on current conditions. All potential for future inadequate drainage or flooding cannot be made.

**Note:**

Client is urged to keep soil levels a minimum of 3-4 inches below top of slab and graded to promote positive drainage and to prevent water from ponding around foundation. Proper soil levels will also help detect insects should they try to enter the home from the outside. High soil levels are considered a conducive condition for Wood Destroying Insects and prevents a visual inspection of the foundation in these areas.





**C. Roof Covering & Materials** (If the roof is inaccessible, the method used to inspect.)

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Overview:**

The roof is a complex system comprised of many components that must work well together to provide weather protection for the house. The major elements in this system include the roofing or roof covering (shingles, tile, membrane), the underlayment (impregnated felt or paper, ice and water shield), metal flashing (lead, copper, aluminum, galvanized steel), sheathing (plywood, OSB, dimensional lumber boards), and the roof rafters themselves.

**Limitations:**

Roof inspections are limited to visual observation of accessible surfaces. The roof is inspected from the roof level, only if it can be done safely and without damaging the roof. Certain types of damage and/or poor workmanship (e.g., improper fastening, manufacturer defects, etc.) may not be apparent during a visual inspection. If the roof is inspected from the ground, certain parts of the roof may not be fully visible. The inspector cannot guarantee that the roof will be free of leaks, nor can the inspector determine the remaining service life of the roof covering.

**Type of Covering:** Asphalt Shingles  
**Viewed From** Viewed w/binoculars

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I	NI	NP	D	<b>INSPECTION ITEM</b>

**D. Roof Structure and Attics**

**Viewed From** Entered

**Approx. Insulation** Average 9 to 11"  
**Depth:**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Overview:**  
 The attic space in a home in Texas is the most important area for insulation. Attic floor insulation should be at least R-19, however for best energy efficiency R-30 is preferable. In this climate, the three most important factors affecting energy efficiency are conduction, radiant solar heat gain, and infiltration gains and losses. Conduction (or direct heat gain or loss through the walls and ceiling) is primarily controlled by insulation. Infiltration loss or gain (drafts or air leakage) is controlled by caulking and weather stripping. Solar heat gain is controlled by the external shading of windows exposed to the sun or reflected sun.

The inspection of the roof structure and attic is limited due to access, insulation, equipment, attic temperate, etc. Insulation is not moved, mobility may be limited. Vapor barriers may not be visible during the inspection.

**E. Walls (Interior and Exterior)**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Method of Inspection:**  
 Inspection of interior and exterior walls focuses on structural performance and water penetration issues. The condition of surface finishes and cosmetic blemishes are not noted, except where they may contribute to or be symptomatic of other problems. Areas enclosed within finished walls and concealed flashing details (e.g., doors, windows, brick ledges, etc.) are not accessible and beyond the scope of the inspection. Home furnishings, artwork, personal items, heavy foliage, etc. can obscure damage, water stains, prior repairs etc., and preclude assessment of these conditions.

**Limitations:**  
 No moisture, mold and /or indoor air quality (IAQ) tests were performed, The inspector is not qualified or certified for such evaluations. The client should be aware that various fungi, molds and mildew can flourish in environments provided by water intrusion events and areas of excessively moist conditions. A growing concern for some clients includes the possible adverse effect on indoor air quality and the potential for related health hazards. If concerned, the client is advised to contact a qualified IAQ Professional for further evaluation of this property.

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I    NI    NP    D    INSPECTION ITEM

   **F. Ceilings and Floors****Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked****Method of Inspection:**

Inspection of ceilings and floors focuses on structural performance and water penetration issues. The condition of surface finishes and cosmetic blemishes are not noted, except where they may contribute to or be symptomatic of other problems. Areas concealed within finished spaces are not accessible and beyond scope of the inspection. Home furnishings, artwork, personal items, etc. can obscure damage, water stains, prior repairs etc., and prevent assessment of these conditions.

   **G. Doors (Interior and Exterior)****Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked****Method of Inspection:**

Interior and exterior doors are inspected for proper functioning, including latches and locking mechanisms. Garage doors are inspected for proper operation, including safety devices on automatic openers.

   **H. Windows****Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked****Method of Inspection:**

Windows, where accessible, are inspected for proper functioning, including latches and locking mechanisms. Broken panes, broken thermal seals, missing or damaged screens and caulking deficiencies are noted. Safety issues including lack of safety glass in required locations and egress issues in sleeping areas are also noted.

   **I. Stairways (Interior & Exterior)****Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

Stairs, rails, balusters, treads and risers are covered in this section. Proper framing of stairwells is concealed to the inspector during the visual inspection and are outside the scope of the visual inspection.

   **J. Fireplaces and Chimneys****Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

Due to liability concerns, gas logs are not ignited during testing.

**Limitations:**

We strongly recommend that prior to using any wood burning fireplace or appliance that the client first has the unit thoroughly inspected, and if necessary cleaned, by a qualified, licensed chimney sweep.

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**I   NI   NP   D            INSPECTION ITEM**

**Method of Inspection:**

Inspection of fireplaces and chimneys focuses on observation of visible and accessible components of the firebox, hearth extension, fuel source, combustion air source, doors, circulation fan, lintel damper, flue, fire blocking at attic penetration, chimney crown, cap and spark arrester. Defects observed in the visible portions of these components are noted in the report. No testing of the draft performance is performed. Defects concealed from view, or are not visible if the roof is inspected from the ground or roof eave level are excluded from the scope of this inspection.

**K. Porches, Balconies, Decks, Carports and Garages**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

Patios, Stairs and Garage Fire Separation are included in this section

**Method of Inspection:**

Porches, decks and carports are visually inspected for structural defects and safety deficiencies. Concealed framing and roof structures that are not visible are outside the scope of this inspection. Outbuildings and detached structures are not inspected.

**L. Other**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

- Cabinets, Closets & Countertops
- Walkways
- Driveways
- Fences/Gates

**II. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS**

**A. Service Entrance and Panels**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

If the home's power supply is shut-off, the inspector will be unable to fully inspect the home's electrical system or any appliances that are dependant upon electricity supply. If the electrical supply is turned off at the time of inspection, no return or follow-up inspection is performed. It is the required coordination between the seller & buyer to insure all utilities are on at the time of inspection. It is never the inspector's responsibility to coordinate the turning on of any utilities to the home. According to state regulations, the inspector is also not allowed to turn on any electrical breakers, main breakers or open any valves or light any gas fired mechanical systems.

**Overview:**

A typical electrical system consists of two distinct components: (1) the electric service

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I	NI	NP	D	<b>INSPECTION ITEM</b>

entrance and (2) the branch circuits. The service entrance determines the capacity of the electric power available to the home. The electric circuits distribute the power throughout the home.

Electrical devices in a home typically use either 120 or 240 voltage electricity. The major appliances such as clothes dryers, kitchen ranges, water heaters, air conditioners, and electric heating units require 240 volts. General-purpose circuits (lighting, outlets, etc) require 120 volts.

**Limitations:**

Inspection of the electrical service system is limited to visible and accessible components of the entrance cable, meter box, service panel and the visible portions of the wiring. A large portion of the electrical system is hidden behind walls and ceilings and not all the conditions relating to these inaccessible areas can be known. Where possible, the cover of the service panel is removed to investigate the conditions in it. While some deficiencies in an electrical system are readily discernible, not all conditions that can lead to the interruption of electrical service, or that may be hazardous, can be identified through a visual inspection. Auxiliary electrical systems such as generators are not inspected. No assessment to the adequacy of the service capacity relative to the current or future consumption is performed.

*No assertion as to the insurability of the property is made.*

**B. Branch circuits - Connected devices and Fixtures**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Limitations:**

Inspection of the electrical distribution system is limited to the visible and accessible components of the distribution wiring, outlets, switches and connected devices. The absence of GFCI and AFI protection devices in required locations is reported. A large portion of the electrical system is hidden behind walls and ceilings and not all the conditions relating to these inaccessible areas can be known. While some deficiencies in an electrical system are readily discernible, not all conditions that can lead to the interruption of electrical service, or that may be hazardous, can be identified through a visual inspection. Low voltage and ancillary electrical systems such as low voltage lighting systems, landscape lighting, generators, etc. are not inspected.

**Smoke Detectors and Alarms:**

Smoke detectors are tested using the manufacturer supplied test button only. This inspection does not include testing units with actual smoke.

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We suggest that home buyers spend some time with the current owner or builder to further understand the operation of this system and, if possible, to obtain all manufacturer's literature. Also, keep in mind that most of these systems do require regular maintenance to assure proper and dependable operation.

The installation of smoke alarm(s) is required inside of all bedrooms and in any rooms designated for the purpose of sleeping, and outside within the proximity of the doors to those rooms. Test all alarms and detectors weekly or monthly per manufacture instructions. The installation of carbon monoxide (CO) detector(s) is required in homes with fuel-fired appliances at every floor elevation and any areas where fuel-fired equipment is located. The installation of Type ABC fire extinguisher(s) at the kitchen, laundry, and garage, if applicable, is also advised. Test all of these devices monthly. Install new batteries semi-annually. Initiate and practice plans of escape and protection for all occupants in case any emergencies arise. Failure to repair defective or install absent alarms, detectors, and other safety equipment immediately can result in serious injury or death. For further information about fire safety and CO poisoning, consult your local fire department and your equipment manufacture(s), and read these links: [www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/464.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/464.pdf), [www.carbonmonoxidekills.com](http://www.carbonmonoxidekills.com), [www.nfpa.org/index.asp](http://www.nfpa.org/index.asp), and [www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pyfff/inhome.html](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pyfff/inhome.html).

**Type of Wiring:**      **Copper**

**FYI:** GFCI's (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters) are modern electrical devices, either a receptacle or a circuit breaker, which is designed to protect people from electric shock. GFCI's are now required in wet or damp environments. In the event of a fault in an appliance that you are touching, the GFCI would detect the current that passes through your body to ground, and shut the circuit off, protecting you from a potentially fatal shock. We strongly recommend that all receptacles located in the Kitchen, Baths, Garage, at Spas, Hot Tubs, Fountains, Pools, crawl spaces and outdoors be upgraded to the ground fault circuit interrupter type. This should be done by a qualified, licensed electrician.

**FYI: GFCI's should be tested monthly,** as some are known to deteriorate and lock in the hot position. Faulty and/or malfunctioning GFCI breakers and receptacles should be replaced immediately. Appliances such as refrigerators should not be put on GFCI's, as a nuisance trip of the device will cause the loss of food.

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<b>INSPECTION ITEM</b>			

**III. HEATING, VENTILATION & AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS**

**A. Heating Equipment**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Overview:**  
 If the home's gas supply is shut-off, the inspector will be unable to fully inspect the home's mechanical systems or any appliances that are dependant upon gas supply. If the gas supply is turned off at the time of inspection, no return or follow-up inspection is performed. It is the required coordination between the seller & buyer to insure all utilities are on at the time of inspection. It is never the inspector's responsibility to coordinate the turning on of any utilities to the home. According to state regulations, the inspector is also not allowed to turn on any electrical breakers, main breakers or open any valves or light any gas fired mechanical systems.

During the hot summer months, the compressor/condensing unit, in conjunction with the evaporator coil, extracts heat from the house and transfers it to the outside. During the cooler winter months, the furnace heats the inside air. For both the heating and cooling processes, the air handler circulates air through the house.

**Type of Systems & Energy Sources:**

**Forced Air**  
 **Radiant**  
 **Other**

**Energy Source:**

**Gas**  
 **Electric**

**B. Cooling Equipment:**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

Exterior HVAC coils should be cleaned ever 2-3 months with a mild detergent and water solution and rinsed with clean water. The unit should be off when cleaned.

**Overview:**  
 The average life of an air conditioner compressor/condenser is approximately 12 to 15 years. It should be determined from the present owner if any compressor / condensing system components have been recently repaired or replaced.

This heating and cooling equipment should be cleaned, serviced and adjusted each year prior to the start of the heating and cooling seasons. This servicing should include the compressor, motor-blower units, filters, and any other component, including electrical controls and devices for starting and operating, etc.



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<b>INSPECTION ITEM</b>			

We strongly recommend cleaning and/or changing of filters every 6 to 8 weeks in the heating and cooling seasons. This will help keep the units running efficiently. Filters are usually located at the return air vents or inside the air handlers.

**Limitations:**

Our visual inspection of the air conditioning system does not check for proper refrigerant charge or test for leaks in the system. The evaporator coil needs cleaning and maintenance periodically. The coil should be cleaned, serviced and inspected if the owner's records do not indicate that this service has been performed within the last year. If the exterior temperature is below 65 degrees an accurate and full AC system assessment and functionality cannot be performed. If this condition exist, it is recommended to have a full HVAC system evaluation by an HVAC company.

If the home's power supply is shut-off, the inspector will be unable to fully inspect the home's HVAC (AC) system or any appliances that are dependant upon electricity supply. If the electrical supply is turned off at the time of inspection, no return or follow-up inspection is performed. It is the required coordination between the seller & buyer to insure all utilities are on at the time of inspection. It is never the inspector's responsibility to coordinate the turning on of any utilities to the home. According to state regulations, the inspector is also not allowed to turn on any electrical breakers, main breakers or open any valves or light any gas fired mechanical systems.

**Type of Systems:**

- Electric
- Forced Air
- Heat Pump
- Window Units

**C. Ducts Systems, Chases and Vents**

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

**Overview:**

Ventilation is very important for all buildings. Attic ventilation will reduce the amount of moisture that can develop in insulated attics and can increase roof shingle life by reducing heat and condensation. Good ventilation yields a healthier living environment as well, as it reduces the accumulation of offensive and/or toxic fumes. Interior ventilation and circulation can be significantly improved by keeping interior doors open whenever possible.

**Limitations:**

Indoor air quality is a growing concern. Mold and mildew, fostered by moisture accumulation can lead to respiratory discomfort and aggravate allergies and other respiratory conditions for some people. While we may comment on readily visible evidence of possible mold infestations this inspection and report should not be considered a mold investigation of any kind. Such an investigation, if desired, should be undertaken by individuals specifically trained and qualified for such work.

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**IV. PLUMBING SYSTEM**

**A. Plumbing Supply, Distribution Systems and Fixtures**  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

The home inspector will be unable to turn on the home's water supply if the water supply is shut-off at the main meter or at the home's water shut-off valve. Therefore the inspector will be unable to fully inspect the water supply and distribution systems. Nor will the inspector be able to fully inspect fixtures or water related appliances during the inspection procedures.

**Overview:**  
 A plumbing system consists of three major components, the supply piping, the waste and vent piping, and the fixtures. The supply piping brings the water to the fixture from a private well or public water main. The supply piping is smaller diameter piping that operates under pressure. These pipes must be watertight. The waste piping carries the water from the fixture to a private septic system or to a public sewer line. The drain or waste piping does not operate under pressure, instead typically uses gravity to drain the water from the fixture to the septic tank or sewer. Thus, these pipes must slope in order to work properly.

**Limitations:**  
 While some water was run down the drains, this cannot simulate the waste flow characteristic of full occupancy. There may be partial blockage of the sanitary drain lines from debris, broken pipes or tree roots that cannot be detected at the time of the inspection. Examination of such partial blockage is beyond the scope of this inspection.

If the home's water supply is shut-off, the inspector will be unable to fully inspect the home's water supply, fixtures or drains or any appliances that are dependant upon the water supply. If the water supply is turned off at the time of inspection, no return or follow-up inspection is performed. It is the required coordination between the seller & buyer to insure all utilities are on at the time of inspection. It is never the inspector's responsibility to coordinate the turning on of any utilities to the home. According to state regulations, the inspector is also not allowed to turn on any electrical breakers, main breakers or open any valves or light any gas fired mechanical systems.

**Location of Water Meter:** Exterior  
**Location of Main Water Supply Valve:** Exterior  
**Static Water Pressure Reading:** 55 PSI

**B. Drains, Wastes and Vents**  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

The home inspector will be unable to turn on the home's water supply if the water supply is shut-off at the main meter or at the home's water shut-off valve. Therefore the inspector will be unable to fully inspect the home's drain, waste and vent systems.

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### C. Water Heating Equipment

Energy Source: Gas

Capacity: 40 GAL

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

*The home inspector will be unable to turn on the home's water supply if the water supply is shut-off at the main meter or at the home's water shut-off valve. Therefore the inspector will be unable to fully inspect the home's water heater systems.*

**Overview:**

Water heaters should be flushed every year or as recommended by the manufacturer to remove sediments that collect at the bottom of the tank. This is done by attaching a hose to the drain valve at the bottom of the heater, directing the discharge to a safe location and turning on the valve (be careful as the discharge water will be hot!). When the water coming out of the hose turns clear then the process is complete.

### D. Hydro-Massage Therapy Equipment

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

FYI: Environmental testing of the whirlpool equipment is not included as part of this inspection. Health problems have been directly linked to bacterial growth in the distribution lines of the tub equipment. I recommend that you consult the manufacture of the equipment more for additional maintenance information and cleaning instructions prior to using the tub. information can be found on the Internet at [www.whirlpoolcouncil.com](http://www.whirlpoolcouncil.com)

## V. APPLIANCES

### A. Dishwasher

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

### B. Food Waste Disposers

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

### C. Range Hood and Exhaust Systems

Exhaust vents should be cleaned on a regular basis.

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

### D. Ranges, Cook Tops and Ovens

**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

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- E. Microwave Oven**  
 Microwave vent-hood filters should be cleaned to remove grease and debris as needed to prevent fire hazards.  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- F. Mechanical Exhaust Vents and Bathroom Heaters**  
 Exhaust fan vents should be cleaned on a regular basis.  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- G. Garage Door Operators**  
 Safety reverse mechanism should be inspected on a regular basis. Buyer should obtain all remote controls from seller before closing along with any special operating instructions these doors require.  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- H. Dryer Exhaust Systems**  
 Dryer vent hoses or flex tubing should be as short as possible.  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- I. Other**  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**  
 Refrigerators That Stay With The Home Are Inspected Under This Section.

**VI. OPTIONAL SYSTEMS**

- A. Landscape Irrigation (Sprinkler) Systems**  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- B. Swimming Pools, Spas Hot Tubs and Equipment**  
 Type of Construction:  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- C. Outbuildings**  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- D. Private Water Wells** (A coliform analysis is recommended.)  
 Type of Pump: Select Type of Pump  
 Type of Storage Equipment : Select Type of Storage Equipment  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- E. Private Sewage Disposal (Septic) Systems**  
 Type of System:  
 Location of Drain Field:  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**
- F. Other**  
**Comments - See Photo Section If Deficient Box Is Checked**

Report Identification

8521

PHOTO PAGE 1

There are water stains in the foyer - no current moisture was detected



The carpet in the home is stained and will require full replacement



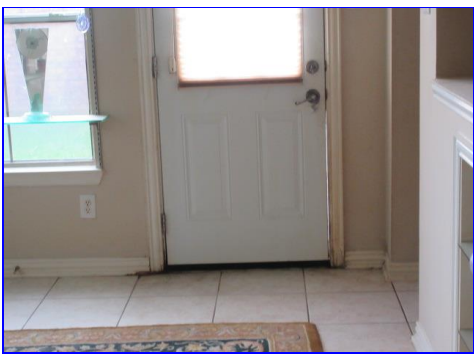
There is a large stress crack that radiates from the garage diagonally through the foyer and kitchen - foundation evaluation needed



The food disposer splash guard is damaged requiring replacement



The rear door does not seal properly



The rear door and door framing has significant water damage and will require full replacement



Report Identification

8521

PHOTO PAGE 2

There are 3-4 of the rear breakfast room window panes that have leaks in the thermal seals - pane replacement is needed



The sink aerators are clogged from sediment in the water heater - aerators require replacement



All missing smoke detectors require replacement and existing detectors are outdated and should also be replaced



HVAC vents require cleaning and sanitizing and all vent filters require replacement



There are missing sections of drywall in the garage ceiling - replacement needed for proper fire blocking



As noted above - foundation cracks radiate across the garage slab into the home diagonally - front left corner has dropped



Report Identification

8521

PHOTO PAGE 3

The attic AC drip pan is rusted and should be replaced



There is heavy sediment in the water heater - heater is at the end of its expected lifespan - heater replacement is needed



There is rust at the top of the water heater - again heater replacement is needed



The dish washer does not function and will require replacement



The rear brick wall is damaged and structurally unsound - wall repairs are needed



The wooden privacy fence and gate are also damaged requiring repairs



PHOTO PAGE 4

Replace the damaged range exhaust vent cover



Trees should be trimmed well away from the home and roof surface



The rear roof decking sags above the chimney - further roof evaluation is needed



The AC system is 21 years old and at the end of its expected lifespan - HVAC evaluation is needed



The water heater's storm collar is not properly installed and sealed at the flue are needed



The sprinkler system plumbing line is broken requiring repairs - system could not be properly tested





Report Identification

8521

PHOTO PAGE 5

There are damaged lead boot jackets on the roof that will require full replacement



There is excessive erosion at the front of the home and no splash blocks under the gutter down spouts



The lower front and upper front roof flashing is lifting - flashing repairs are needed



The sidewalk is uneven creating a trip and fall hazard





APPROVED BY THE TEXAS REAL ESTATE COMMISSION (TREC)  
P.O. BOX 12188, AUSTIN, TX 78711-2188

## TEXAS REAL ESTATE CONSUMER NOTICE CONCERNING HAZARDS OR DEFICIENCIES

Each year, Texans sustain property damage and are injured by accidents in the home. While some accidents may not be avoidable, many other accidents, injuries, and deaths may be avoided through the identification and repair of certain hazardous conditions. Examples of such hazards include:

- malfunctioning, improperly installed, or missing ground fault circuit protection (GFCI) devices for electrical receptacles in garages, bathrooms, kitchens, and exterior areas;
- malfunctioning arc fault protection (AFCI) devices;
- ordinary glass in locations where modern construction techniques call for safety glass;
- malfunctioning or lack of fire safety features, such as smoke alarms, fire-rated doors in certain locations, and functional emergency escape and rescue openings in bedrooms;
- malfunctioning carbon monoxide alarms;
- excessive spacing between balusters on stairways and porches;
- improperly installed appliances;
- improperly installed or defective safety devices;
- lack of electrical bonding and grounding; and
- lack of bonding on gas piping, including corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST).

To ensure that consumers are informed of hazards such as these, the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) has adopted Standards of Practice requiring licensed inspectors to report these conditions as "Deficient" when performing an inspection for a buyer or seller, if they can be reasonably determined.

These conditions may not have violated building codes or common practices at the time of the construction of the home, or they may have been "grandfathered" because they were present prior to the adoption of codes prohibiting such conditions. While the TREC Standards of Practice do not require inspectors to perform a code compliance inspection, TREC considers the potential for injury or property loss from the hazards addressed in the Standards of Practice to be significant enough to warrant this notice.

Contract forms developed by TREC for use by its real estate license holders also inform the buyer of the right to have the home inspected and can provide an option clause permitting the buyer to terminate the contract within a specified time. Neither the Standards of Practice nor the TREC contract forms requires a seller to remedy conditions revealed by an inspection. The decision to correct a hazard or any deficiency identified in an inspection report is left to the parties to the contract for the sale or purchase of the home.

This form has been approved by the Texas Real Estate Commission for voluntary use by its license holders. Copies of TREC rules governing real estate brokers, salesperson and real estate inspectors are available from TREC, Texas Real Estate Commission, P.O. Box 12188, Austin, TX 78711-2188, 512-936-3000 (<http://www.trec.texas.gov>)

## ADDENDUM: INSPECTOR'S MAINTENANCE ADVICE

### Upon Taking Ownership

After taking possession of a new home, there are some maintenance and safety issues that should be addressed immediately. The following checklist should help you undertake these improvements:

- Change the locks on all exterior entrances, for improved security.
- Check that all windows and doors are secure. Improve window hardware as necessary. Security rods can be added to sliding windows and doors. Consideration could also be given to a security system.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of the home. Ensure that there is a smoke detector outside all sleeping areas. Replace batteries on any existing smoke detectors and test them. Make a note to replace batteries again in one year.
- Create a plan of action in the event of a fire in your home. Ensure that there is an operable window or door in every room of the house. Consult with your local fire department regarding fire safety issues and what to do in the event of fire.
- Examine driveways and walkways for trip hazards. Undertake repairs where necessary.
- Examine the interior of the home for trip hazards. Loose or torn carpeting and flooring should be repaired.
- Undertake improvements to all stairways, decks, porches and landings where there is a risk of falling or stumbling.
- Review your home inspection report for any items that require immediate improvement or further investigation. Address these areas as required.
- Install rain caps and vermin screens on all chimney flues, as necessary.
- Investigate the location of the main shut-offs for the plumbing, heating and electrical systems. If you attended the home inspection, these items would have been pointed out to you.

### Regular Maintenance

#### EVERY MONTH

- Check that fire extinguisher(s) are fully charged. Re-charge if necessary.
- Examine heating/cooling air filters and replace or clean as necessary.
- Inspect and clean humidifiers and electronic air cleaners.
- If the house has hot water heating, bleed radiator valves.
- Clean gutters and downspouts. Ensure that downspouts are secure, and that the discharge of the downspouts is appropriate. Remove debris from window wells.
- Carefully inspect the condition of shower enclosures. Repair or replace deteriorated grout and caulk. Ensure that water is not escaping the enclosure during showering. Check below all plumbing fixtures for evidence of leakage.
- Repair or replace leaking faucets or shower heads.
- Secure loose toilets, or repair flush mechanisms that become troublesome.

#### SPRING AND FALL

- Examine the roof for evidence of damage to roof coverings, flashings and chimneys.
- Look in the attic (if accessible) to ensure that roof vents are not obstructed. Check for evidence of leakage, condensation or vermin activity. Level out insulation if needed.
- Trim back tree branches and shrubs to ensure that they are not in contact with the house.
- Inspect the exterior walls and foundation for evidence of damage, cracking or movement. Watch for bird nests or other vermin or insect activity.
- Survey the basement and/or crawl space walls for evidence of moisture seepage.
- Look at overhead wires coming to the house. They should be secure and clear of trees or other obstructions.
- Ensure that the grade of the land around the house encourages water to flow away from the foundation.
- Inspect all driveways, walkways, decks, porches, and landscape components for evidence of deterioration, movement or safety hazards.

- Clean windows and test their operation. Improve caulking and weather-stripping as necessary. Watch for evidence of rot in wood window frames. Paint and repair window sills and frames as necessary.
- Test all ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) devices, as identified in the inspection report.
- Shut off isolating valves for exterior hose bibs in the fall, if below freezing temperatures are anticipated.
- Test the Temperature and Pressure Relief (TPR) Valve on water heaters.
- Inspect for evidence of wood boring insect activity. Eliminate any wood/soil contact around the perimeter of the home.
- Test the overhead garage door opener, to ensure that the auto-reverse mechanism is responding properly. Clean and lubricate hinges, rollers and tracks on overhead doors.
- Replace or clean exhaust hood filters.
- Clean, inspect and/or service all appliances as per the manufacturer's recommendations.

### **ANNUALLY**

- Replace smoke detector batteries.
- Have the heating, cooling and water heater systems cleaned and serviced.
- Have chimneys inspected and cleaned. Ensure that rain caps and vermin screens are secure.
- Examine the electrical panels, wiring and electrical components for evidence of overheating. Ensure that all components are secure. Flip the breakers on and off to ensure that they are not sticky.
- If the house utilizes a well, check and service the pump and holding tank. Have the water quality tested. If the property has a septic system, have the tank inspected (and pumped as needed).
- If your home is in an area prone to wood destroying insects (termites, carpenter ants, etc.), have the home inspected by a licensed specialist. Preventative treatments may be recommended in some cases.

### **Prevention Is The Best Approach**

Although we've heard it many times, nothing could be more true than the old cliché "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Preventative maintenance is the best way to keep your house in great shape. It also reduces the risk of unexpected repairs and improves the odds of selling your house at fair market value, when the time comes.

Please feel free to contact our office should you have any questions regarding the operation or maintenance of your home. Enjoy your home!

## **ADDENDUM: FIRE SAFETY**

### **Around the House**

- Store combustible materials in appropriate containers well away from flame and heat.
- Do not store oily rags in a pile as spontaneous combustion can result. Use a sealed metal container.
- Store matches and lighters away from curious children, heat or flammable items and teach children that matches and tools are to be used only by adults.
- All bedrooms should have two exits.
- Doors and windows should open easily.
- Windows should not be painted shut or obstructed. Burglar bars not readily operable create a hazard.
- Rope ladders kept upstairs may provide safe exit from a second story.

#### **Kitchen**

- Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles such as paper, hot pads, dish towels, etc.
- Avoid long or loose sleeve clothing around the stove.
- Turn pan handles inward to avoid accidental spilling.
- If grease catches fire, turn off all burners, carefully place a lid over the pan to smother flames, then remove pan from heat if over an electric element.

#### **Laundry**

- Vent clothes dryers to the exterior in a metal duct, a lint trap is installed and lint trap is cleaned before each use.

- Do not operate dryer when no one is home.
- Keep area behind washer and dryer free of combustible lint, etc. by periodic cleaning.

### **Space Heaters**

- Unvented gas heaters create a fire and carbon monoxide hazard and should never be used in the home.
- Keep portable electric space heaters at least 3 feet from combustible materials such as drapes, walls and furniture.
- Never operate space heaters unattended. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.

### **Fireplaces**

- Wood-burning fireplaces should be inspected by a certified chimney sweep before each heating season.
- Do not store wood or kindling near fireplace openings, for example on a hearth extension.
- All fireplace flues should have approved rain caps and spark arrestor screens installed.
- Do not operate a fireplace with screens open.
- Always remove and store ashes in a sealed metal container.

### **Grilling**

- Never use a portable grill indoors because of dangerous combustion by-products and the high risk of fire.
- Keep BBQ grills well away from combustible materials such as siding on your home, cars, dry vegetation, etc., and do not use outdoor cooking equipment on wooden decks or under roof overhangs, carports or patio covers.
- Stay with the grill once it is lit; keep children and pets at a safe distance.
- Protect yourself by wearing an appropriate apron, long sleeves and a long oven mitt.

### **Electrical Safety**

- Do not use extension cords as permanent wiring or run extension cords under carpeting or furniture.
- Do not overload extension cords or electrical outlets and replace frayed, damaged or cracked cords or cords warm to the touch.
- Place halogen lights well away from flammable drapes and low ceilings. Never leave them burning when leaving the house.
- Check maximum wattage rating of light fixtures and do not exceed manufacturer's recommendations.
- Always have an electrician investigate flickering lights, breakers that trip or outlets and switches not operable or warm to the touch.

### **Fire Extinguishers**

- Install only extinguishers designed to fight all types of fires – (A B C).
- Fire extinguishers should be located at every exit.
- Because fires quickly grow from small to large, The National Fire Protections Association (NFPA) cautions to realize one's limits in fighting fires. NFPA recommends fire extinguishers be used only when everyone is out of the house and the fire department is on the way
- Familiarize the family with the operation instructions and safety precautions located on the extinguisher and in the owner's manual.
- Follow maintenance directions on extinguishers and check pressure indicators monthly to assure proper operation.

### **Smoke Detectors**

- Current standards require smoke detectors be installed in each bedroom, adjacent hallways, each level of the house and where changes in ceiling elevation exceed two feet.
- Install smoke detectors within 12" of ceilings.
- If possible, hard wired smoke detectors should be interconnected so that if one detector sounds, all units will sound.
- Test alarms once a month, clean detectors and replace batteries according to manufacturer's directions.
- Replace smoke detectors older than 10 years.

## Home Fire Escape Planning and Practice

- React immediately to the sound of an alarm.
- In the Event of a Fire—Don't stop to call 911. Exit immediately and call from a neighbor's house.
- Prepare an emergency escape plan with the whole family and practice it twice a year.
- To create an escape route:
  - Draw a Floor Plan of your home and learn the landmarks of your house. A house looks much different when filled with smoke or when crawling to reach and exit.
  - Practice exiting your home, memorizing landmarks both standing and crawling on a regular basis.
  - Choose a meeting place outside for all family members to group after escape.

## ADDITIONAL HOME MAINTENANCE GUIDE

Although the information provided hereafter is based on the inspectors' extensive experience and knowledge of recognized home maintenance procedures, it is not intended to substitute for the services of qualified professionals with on-site knowledge. Before attempting any dangerous activities and to clarify any uncertainties, seek the advice of an appropriate local expert. Recognized safety procedures should be followed when performing any home maintenance tasks.

## IN THE YARD

### Site Safety

Periodically walk around the yard with an eye to safety. Have dogs dug holes that might trip someone? Are sidewalks and driveways free of clutter and tripping hazards like raised edges? Are covers for water meters or lawn sprinkler control boxes properly installed? Look for low hanging branches, wires or other hazards. Corrective action now may prevent grief later.

Gather old or unused paints, insecticides, toxic cleaners and depleted household batteries for hazardous waste pickup or delivery to an approved disposal site.

### Site Drainage

Is your property on a hillside that directs water runoff towards the house, or is your lot basically flat? Your goal is to have rain drain off the lot promptly without ponding within ten feet of the house. Equally important, the soil should not be allowed to dry out and separate from the edges of the foundation. Resulting gaps between the soil and the slab indicate that the soil is too dry—water that foundation! Consider ringing your foundation with soaker hoses placed two feet away from it. The slow, steady watering provided by soaker hoses helps stabilize soil moisture, protecting the slab. Solutions to drainage problems are as varied as the terrain, and may include rain gutters and gutter extensions, French drains, swales and berms, retaining walls, catch basins and even sump pumps. With a little planning and some work, almost any yard can provide a healthy environment for a stable foundation, a dry house, and control of mosquitoes.

### Trees and Shrubs

To minimize wood rot and insect damage in siding and trim, allow air to freely circulate next to the house. This is easily accomplished by locating decorative plants several feet away from exterior walls and keeping them trimmed. If siding is easily visible, maintenance problems will be detected early and unwanted guests won't have a place to hide. Vines growing on any exterior surface will cause serious damage over time and should not be permitted. Do not try to remove vines by pulling them off. Instead, sever them at the ground and wait until the plants have died before removing them.

Trees should be planted far enough away from the house that their canopy will not overhang the roof when they are fully mature (as in drawing below). A tree's root system mimics its canopy. Roots growing under a foundation can destabilize it in several ways—for instance, by removing moisture from the soil that a foundation needs for its structural support.

When trees are close to the house, their limbs should never touch the building, or serious damage can result. Be aware, too, that growing root systems can lift sidewalks, patios and driveways, causing damage and creating trip hazards.

## FOR A SOLID FOUNDATION

### **Concrete Slabs**

Walk around the house studying the edges of the foundation. Look for cracks in the edges or soil separation from the edge of the slab (see "Site Drainage," above) and unusual discoloration or water stains, mud or mounded dirt piles on the slab edge.

Cracks in the foundation edge may indicate foundation movement or settling. Some cracks are not unusual and may not be structurally significant, but if in doubt, have a qualified structural engineer or other expert evaluate them. Discoloration and/or water stains can indicate a plumbing leak in the house and should be evaluated by a qualified plumber. Mud or mounded dirt piles on slab edges may indicate destructive or hazardous insects invading the house. Again, call an expert—a qualified pest control operator.

### **Pier and Beam**

Walk around the perimeter of the house looking for cracks or damage to the crawl space skirting and ventilation openings. Skirting and vent screens should be kept in good condition to prevent animal access and to maintain adequate ventilation year-round. Inadequate venting or blocked vents can lead to moisture build-up under the house, fostering wood rot and wood-destroying insects.

An annual inspection of the crawl space is best left to a qualified inspector. If you must do it yourself, follow these safety tips. Always let someone know where you will be, wear sturdy coveralls and a dust mask, carry a bright light and avoid contact with any electrical wiring. The crawl space should be clean and dry. Nothing should ever be stored in the crawl space. While under the house, look for evidence of animal infestation, leaking plumbing, foundation movement and anything else unusual like damp or rotted wood in bath and kitchen areas. After completing your inspection, be sure that the access hatch cover is in good repair, fits the opening properly and is securely closed.

## ON THE ROOF

**NOTE:** Falling from a roof can be hazardous to your health! Do not get on a roof unless you are completely comfortable, have the proper equipment for access, and wear appropriate clothing—including rubber-soled shoes. If you have any doubts, ask a qualified roofing contractor or inspector to check the roof. Most roof repairs are best left to a qualified roofing contractor.

### **Overhanging Trees**

Tree limbs rubbing on a roof can do serious damage. Overhanging branches should be kept trimmed to provide adequate clearance even in a high wind, and to prevent insect infestation. Trees can grow rapidly and should be inspected at least twice a year. Oak wilt is a serious problem in many areas of Texas and can best be prevented by trimming oaks during the coldest or hottest times of year. Sterilize pruning tools with bleach, and promptly cover cuts with wound paint. Major trimming is best left to a certified arborist.

### **Chimneys and Metal Flashing**

Inspect the chimney crown for cracking (masonry) or rusting (metal). Cracking or rusting should be repaired to prevent water penetration and deterioration. The rain cover and spark arrestor screening should be in good condition. If none is present, after-market cap/screen units are available. After measuring the top flue tile for size, purchase and install one. If the chimney is wood, be sure that wood and trim are sound; if masonry, that bricks or stone are not loose or cracked, permitting water penetration.

Most roof leaks occur around flashings. Metal flashings at the chimney, in roof valleys, at sidewalls and vents should be in good condition, not rusted or bent. They should lay flat on the roofing surface, laced in the roof covering "shingle style." Do not nail down raised flashings. The nail puts a hole in the roof, allowing water penetration.

### **Rain Gutters and Downspouts**

If you don't have rain gutters, consider adding them. Properly installed gutters can help solve drainage problems and promote foundation health.

Clean rain gutters and downspouts as needed to keep them flowing freely. In an area of heavy trees, cleaning may be required several times a year. Consider the addition of gutter guards to reduce maintenance. Inspect gutters for proper drainage (standing water can breed mosquitoes), leaks at seams or end caps, loose or missing gutter spikes and loose or missing downspouts. Look behind gutters for rotted fascia, and repair as needed. Splash blocks or downspout extensions should direct water into the yard well away from the foundation.

## Roof Surfaces

On composition shingle roofs look for signs of damage or wear. Sweep off leaves and debris. Worn surfaces, missing granular coating, cracked, pitted, brittle or swollen shingles are signs that shingles may be nearing the end of their useful life. Raised shingle tabs may indicate improperly seated fasteners that can be carefully resealed; take care not to tear the shingle or poke a hole in it. Split, torn or missing shingles may cause leaks and should be replaced immediately. While on the roof, also check the condition of sidewalls not visible from the ground.

Metal roofs are best observed from a ladder at the eaves. Walking on a metal roof can bend panels, creating leaks. Look for loose fasteners, rusted panels, open seams, bent flashing and deteriorated caulking. Leaves and debris should be removed from roof surfaces.

Flat or built-up roofs may be surfaced with several different types of roofing materials. Generally, check for areas of water ponding, areas of missing aggregate coverings or gravel, tears or blisters in the surface and deep alligator cracking. Also check the condition of flashings at edges and vents. Flat roofs are prone to leak and require regular maintenance; therefore a qualified roofing contractor should further investigate any such problems. Leaves and debris left on the roof will hold water and speed deterioration.

Concrete and clay tile roofs are easily damaged, and a thorough inspection is best left to a qualified roofing contractor. Walking on a tile roof is not recommended. From the eaves you can check the general roof condition. Look for rotted fascia, loose or cracked tiles, deteriorated caulking and sealant.

## IN THE ATTIC

**NOTE:** Attic inspections are best conducted during cool weather or early in the morning. If you expect to spend more than a few minutes in the attic, a dust mask is recommended. Exercise extreme care to step only on solid decking or framing members. Falling through the ceiling could ruin your day!

### Ventilation

Good ventilation removes moisture and heat from the attic, contributing to a healthy house. Check that your attic is adequately ventilated and that all vent screens are in good condition. To check soffit vents, stand in the center of a dark attic and look for light at the edges of the house. No visible light may indicate soffit vents are blocked by insulation. Torn or missing screens allow birds and other critters into the attic; they should be repaired or replaced. Consider calling an exterminator if you find rodent droppings, nesting materials or other evidence of critters. Be sure that attic vent pipes from bathrooms, the kitchen range hood and the clothes dryer are intact and direct moisture and fumes through the roof to the outside. In some older homes, bathroom vents and the kitchen range hood were terminated in the attic. This is unsafe and no longer considered acceptable. Consider extending these vents through the roof. A good time to do this is when the roof surface is replaced.

### Insulation

Adequate attic insulation helps keep your home comfortable and lowers heating and cooling costs. Look at the insulation in your attic spaces and consider adding insulation if yours is skimpy, compacted or unevenly distributed. Consult an insulation specialist to determine what is recommended in your area.

### Structure and Framing

Check roof framing for loose members and separation or gaps where rafters connect to ridge boards. Also be sure metal truss plates are not twisted or loose. Excessive evidence of movement could suggest foundation problems and should be inspected by a qualified structural engineer. The underside of roof decking should be dry and free of water stains and mildew caused by leaks. Valleys deserve special attention.

### HVAC Ductwork

Significant amounts of conditioned air can be lost to the attic through leaky ducts. Inspect ductwork for leaks at connections and joints, proper support, tight bends and general condition. During the 1980s a flexible duct with a gray plastic covering was used extensively. This gray plastic covering deteriorates in attics. Damaged ductwork should be replaced.

## AROUND THE OUTSIDE

### Foliage

Remove or thin dense foliage close to the house to allow for inspection of exterior surfaces and good air circulation. Vines should not be allowed to grow on or cover walls. The foliage holds moisture, promotes rot and damages all siding types.



## **Decks and Balconies**

Inspect deck and balcony steps and surfaces for loose fasteners, "nail pops" (nails backing out), rotted wood and proper operation of gates and latches. Replace rotted boards and framing members. Loose fasteners should be removed and replaced with ring shank nails or decking screws for better holding power. Aluminum or stainless steel fasteners cost more but will not rust. Rebuild any loose, missing or rotted railings, benches or steps. Current safety standards require railing or baluster spacing to be four inches or less to prevent the passage of small children.

Dirt, mold and mildew can be removed from deck surfaces by power washing. Power washing equipment can be found at most rental centers. After the surface is clean, finish with a deck sealant or wood stain for a longer lasting, better looking deck.

## **Exterior Walls**

Eight inches clearance from grade to bottom of sill plate is recommended to minimize moisture damage and insect infestation. If soil is graded to improve siding clearance, take care that water does not pond at the foundation edge (see "Site Drainage").

Exterior surfaces should be checked for fading, chalking, blistered or flaking paint; rusted fasteners and "nail pops"; loose or rotted wood, panels and trim; gaps between panels, and water damage. Masonite, hardboard and other composite panels are prone to "nail pops" and water damage at edges and bottoms, and should be kept well painted and dry. Remember to thoroughly paint the bottom edge of these panels, for greatest protection. Loose fasteners can be replaced with large-headed screws (with washers if necessary) for a more permanent repair. Gaps or cracks at trim or between panels should be sealed with a good quality exterior caulk. When repainting exterior surfaces, pay special attention to surface repair and preparation so your paint job will last.

Masonry walls should be inspected for soft or missing mortar, cracks or separations in mortar joints and cracked or loose bricks or stones. A competent mason can replace soft or missing mortar. Cracked masonry or mortar joints may indicate foundation distress and should be inspected by a qualified structural engineer who can recommend any needed repairs or remedial action. Weep holes are openings in the bottom of brick or stone walls and above window and door lintels designed to allow an escape route for moisture that enters the wall cavity. Weep holes are usually spaced about four feet apart and should not be obstructed.

Carefully inspect stucco surfaces for cracks and evidence of moisture penetration. Stucco is often installed without provision for moisture to escape from wall cavities. Moisture seeping through cracks can do serious damage before detection. Professional repairs are recommended. Stucco siding should terminate several inches above the soil.

## **Outside Doors**

Check doors, door trim and thresholds for wood rot or water damage. Replace any deteriorated exterior caulking with a good quality latex caulk compatible with door and wall materials. Hinges should be secure, and knobs and locks functioning properly. Properly installed weather-stripping at exterior doors helps lower your energy bills, so keep it snug and in good condition.

Sliding glass doors let us view and access the outdoors but also bring their own set of problems. Worn rollers or a dirty track can make doors hard to operate. Most rollers can be adjusted, and replacement parts for many types of doors are available at home centers, glass shops and screen shops. Sliding door lock failure is a common problem; locks should be kept in good working order. Many types of supplementary locks are available for sliding doors and are a good investment in home security. Sliding door screens are often neglected. Keeping rollers working smoothly and replacing torn screens will pay dividends when you want to feel the breeze on a nice spring day.

Examine garage doors and the surrounding framing for evidence of wood rot and physical damage. Check doors for proper operation and balance. (Release the automatic operator if one is present with the door in the down position.) The door should easily open to its full height and close smoothly without crashing to the floor. A balanced door will stay in place when opened to a height of five or six feet. Rollers and hinges should not be loose and should operate smoothly. Regular servicing of rollers and tracks will help keep them working well. Since springs are under great tension and can cause serious injury or damage if mishandled, the adjustment of door springs is best left to a qualified contractor.

Reattach the automatic operator and test the safety reversing mechanism. Place a rolled up Sunday newspaper or a 2x4-inch board flat on the floor under the center brace in the garage door, and operate the door. A properly adjusted door will automatically reopen when striking the paper or board, without excessive

pressure or jerking. (Note: lightweight metal doors can be damaged if the reverse mechanism does not function properly during this test). Adjustments at the operator motor can correct most malfunctions. Door operators manufactured after 1993 will also have optical sensors installed near the floor on each side of the door opening. If the beam between the sensors is broken while the door is closing, it should reverse directions and open. If the optical sensors are not properly aligned, the door will not function as intended. Do not attempt to circumvent these safety features. They are designed to minimize the risk of a large, heavy, moving object.

### **Windows and Screens**

Open and close all the windows in your house. Clean and lubricate any that stick, and straighten any bent tracks. Bedroom windows must open fully to allow for fire escape; any security bars must have safety release mechanisms that do not require a key and can be easily opened in an emergency. Be sure no glass is broken and that the window locks function properly. Lock replacement parts can be found in home centers and glass shops. Double pane windows fog when the sealed air space between the glass panes loses its seal, and moisture enters the cavity. Though these windows will still operate, they may become impossible to see through and should be replaced by a qualified glass company.

From the outside, inspect wood frames and sills for rot, and check the caulking around the frame. Any gaps or cracks should be sealed with a good quality exterior caulk. Repair or replace damaged or missing window screens.

## **APPLIANCE MAINTENANCE**

### **Refrigerator**

Note: Refrigerators are not part of typical home inspections.

Check door seals by closing the door on a dollar bill and trying to pull it out. Gaskets that seal properly will grip the bill, making it hard to remove. Periodically remove the kick plate from the front of the refrigerator, remove and clean the drip pan underneath, and vacuum dust bunnies from the cooling coils. If practical, pull the refrigerator away from the wall, clean behind it and check the icemaker valve for leaks.

### **Range: Cook top and Oven**

Illegible or broken control knobs should be replaced. Surface burners and heating elements should be inspected for proper operation on both high and low settings. Any "on" indicator lights should illuminate. Check heating accuracy by placing an oven thermometer in the oven and setting the temperature at 350 degrees. Let the oven heat for at least 25 minutes, then check the thermometer. If it reads within 25 degrees of 350, the oven is operating within normal limits. If not, most oven thermostats can be corrected (sometimes at the control knob).

New ranges are being installed with an "anti-tip device." This bracket type device at the back of the range prevents tipping if a child climbs onto the oven door to see what's in the soup pot. Most older ranges were installed without this device; consider having one installed if small children are around your house.

### **Range Hood or Vent**

Most older range hoods have an exterior vent, while many newer models over electric ranges simply recirculate the air through filters and back into the kitchen. Some cook tops are designed with a downdraft vent on the cook top surface. All are acceptable. Many of the older exterior vents terminate in the attic, an unacceptable practice today. This arrangement blows grease into the attic creating a fire hazard. We recommend that the vent be extended to the outside.

Test the function of these vents by operating the fan and light. If the unit is very dirty, cleaning may be necessary. Be sure the power supply is shut off before using any cleaning fluids around the fan motor. Metal filters can be cleaned in the dishwasher. The charcoal filters in re-circulating range hoods have a life of only ten hours. If the light doesn't work, try replacing the bulb.

### **Dishwasher**

Check the dishwasher for freely spinning washer arms, proper door spring operation and attachment to the counter. Close the soap dish and operate the unit in the normal cycle. During the rinse cycle, open the door (washing should stop) to see if the washer arms are turning and the soap dish has opened. Remove the kick plate from the bottom front of the unit to check underneath for leaks. If the dishwasher is an older model and needs several repairs, consider replacing it. Even a seemingly minor problem like rust on the baskets can cost \$200-300 to replace the offending parts.

Finally, check the drain hose to see if it has an anti-siphon loop. This loop, intended to help keep water and

food in the sink or disposer from backing up into the dishwasher tub, will be looped up against the bottom of the countertop before it connects to the disposer or drain pipe under the kitchen sink.

### **Food Disposer**

Remember that the disposer is a vegetarian, especially if sewage disposal is through a septic system. Fats and grease can plug drainpipes and hinder bacteria in a septic system, and bones or other hard objects can damage or jam the grinding plate. If the unit jams, turn the power off and work out the jam using the allen wrench (supplied with a new disposer) in the slot at the bottom of the disposer. Press the red reset button on the bottom of the unit to reset the internal breaker, turn on the water and run the disposer. No response? Call a plumber. If the rubber splashguard is worn and allows garbage to splash out the top during operation, you may find a replacement splashguard or a strainer for the sink drain at most home centers. Excessive vibration and noise, or a unit that is rusted out means it's time for a new disposer.

### **Laundry Connections and Dryer Vent**

Check laundry faucets and washer connections for leaks and corrosion. Corrosion at faucets indicates small leaks that can turn into big leaks. In hard water areas, periodically clean the screens in the hose at the washer connections. Consider replacing old worn hoses to prevent bursting and flooding. If a floor drain is present, pour a cup of water in it and check the exterior termination to be sure it is not clogged.

Annually check your dryer vent for excessive lint buildup and clean the vent. Cleaning the dryer's lint screen before each use prevents lint buildup and saves energy.

### **Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

Each month press the test button on your detectors to be sure they work, and at least once a year (the start of daylight savings time is a good reminder) change all batteries. Recycle the alarm batteries in entertainment remotes or kids' toys, where their possible failure isn't a life-or-death matter. If you don't have smoke detectors, install one in each bedroom and in bedroom halls. If you have gas appliances, consider installing carbon monoxide detectors near furnaces and water heaters. All of these alarms are a very minor expense weighed against their usefulness in an emergency.

### **Fire Extinguishers**

You do have one, don't you? Be sure the fire extinguisher is suitable for all types of fires (it should be marked A, B, and C to indicate this) and is conveniently located. Make sure all family members know the location of the extinguisher, and how to operate it. Each month check that the fire extinguisher is fully charged and has not passed its expiration date.

## **FIREPLACE AND CHIMNEY**

On the roof, check out the chimney crown as described in "Chimneys and Metal Flashing."

When the weather begins to cool and leaves start to fall, it's time to check out the fireplace. Visually inspect the firebox, looking for loose or shifted bricks (if brick). If necessary, have a qualified chimney sweep replace them and re-point mortar cracks. Check the damper for proper operation and inspect the flue. Excessive soot or creosote buildup should be removed to prevent a chimney fire. Gas log lighter pipes should be free of excessive corrosion and should burn evenly along their entire length. Helpful hint: To help prevent ashes from clogging the gas holes in the lighter pipe, install the pipe with the holes pointed sideways or down.

## **KEEPING COMFORTABLE**

NOTE: A semi-annual service contract with a qualified HVAC contractor to inspect and service all types of heating and air conditioning equipment will keep yours operating efficiently and extend its life.

### **Return Air Filters**

The single most important thing a homeowner can do to keep the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system operating at peak efficiency is to keep the return air filters clean and properly secured in place. The filters should fit snugly. If they lift when the blower comes on, unfiltered air is bypassing the filter. Check filters monthly and clean or replace them when they start looking dirty.

### **Thermostats and Controls**

Visually inspect the wall thermostat for any damage or missing parts, and repair as needed. Programmable thermostats have a battery that must be changed if the LCD readout indicates the battery is weak. There is also a "fan limit switch" that ensures greater energy efficiency. If the blower either runs continuously after turning off

the heat or shuts off immediately, the fan limit switch may not be functioning properly; a qualified HVAC contractor should service the unit.

### **Heating**

Inspect the combustion chamber in gas-fired furnaces to be sure a bright blue flame is visible along the entire length of burner pipes. A yellow flame or excessive rust or soot indicates improper combustion and/or a possible leak in the heat exchanger that could allow combustion gases and carbon monoxide to enter your living area. This potentially dangerous situation requires professional inspection and repair.

Electric heat requires little homeowner maintenance. Simply be observant, and if the unit does not seem to be heating adequately, call your HVAC contractor to evaluate it.

### **Air Conditioning**

To kill fungus and keep your air conditioner running smoothly, pour one cup of a 50/50 solution of chlorine bleach and water into the opening at the condensate drain line where it exits the evaporator coil. Doing this in spring and fall will also prevent condensate from backing up into house and flooding the area. Check the flow of water through the condensate drain by observing flow at its termination or the flow of water in the pipe. If the drain does not flow freely, simply blowing it out may solve the problem. This drain line should terminate at least five feet from your home's foundation to prevent a wet area at the foundation edge.

Outside the house trim foliage back from condensing unit coil fins for proper air circulation and more efficient operation. Manufacturers recommend at least two feet clearance around and five feet above the unit. Listen for unusual fan or motor noise that might signal impending failure. Inspect coil fins for damage and make repairs if needed. HVAC contractors have special tools for straightening bent coil fins. Watch for fire ants that may invade the unit and cause serious problems. Use of an insecticide around the condensing unit to control fire ants is a wise preventive measure.

### **Evaporative Coolers**

At the beginning of the cooling season, inspect the cooler for rust and other damage. Check the water pump and blower for proper operation, and make repairs as necessary. Evaporative pads should be rinsed clean or replaced to facilitate maximum evaporation and cooling.

## **DON'T BE SHOCKED - ELECTRICAL**

### **Ground Fault Protection (GFCIs)**

Electric outlets called Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter receptacles save lives by cutting power to appliances that may short out and shock you. Current safety standards require ground fault protection at receptacles serving kitchen countertops, in bathrooms, within six feet of bar or laundry sinks, in the garage (if undedicated), and outdoors. Many older homes lack this protection. GFCI receptacles should be installed by a qualified electrician at all required locations. Periodically test GFCI receptacles by pressing the "test" button to interrupt power and the "reset" button to restore it. A lamp or other small device plugged into the receptacle should turn off and on accordingly. Inexpensive circuit testers with GFCI testing capability are available at most home centers and hardware stores. Defective GFCI receptacles should be replaced by a qualified electrician.

### **Exterior Electrical Connections**

Electricity is supplied to houses through overhead power lines or underground cables. Visually inspect overhead lines for contact with trees or shrubs, and call your electric utility company to inform them of any such contact. Advise them also of the following: a power line less than 10 ft. above a yard or 12 ft. above a driveway; improper connection or anchoring at the service mast or building (check for signs that wires, cables and anchor bolts have pulled loose); and frayed or damaged wiring cables. For underground service, check for loose connections and damage to electrical conduit at the meter and main service panel. Remember that you cannot disconnect the power on the supplier side of the meter (from your meter to the pole), so all these conditions present a hazard and should be professionally repaired right away.

Inspect the main service panels to be sure that the inside cover is properly secured in place and there are no broken breaker handles, open breaker slots or missing knockouts in the inside cover or panel box. Blanks are available to fill open breaker slots to keep out nesting wasps and lizards, and to protect seven-year-old electricians with screwdrivers. Breakers that repeatedly trip indicate a serious problem and must be investigated by a qualified electrician. For your safety, do not remove the inside panel cover. Leave the inspection of panel interiors to professionals.

Check exterior receptacles and switches for proper operation and damage. Replace broken or damaged outlets

and missing or broken covers (for weather protection).

### **Interior Electrical Service**

Interior service panels, or subpanels, require the same inspection recommended for main panels (above).

Again, leave inspection of the panel interior to a qualified professional.

Check interior receptacles and switches for broken or missing wall covers, broken parts, and for those not working or hot to the touch. Dimmer switches or switches controlling multiple lighting fixtures may need lower wattage bulbs to prevent overheating. Carefully read and follow instructions when installing dimmer switches or rheostats on lights or ceiling fans. Before attempting any electrical repairs, be sure the power has been shut off at the appropriate breaker and that you are properly observing safety precautions. If you have any doubts or are not completely comfortable working with electrical wires or appliances, don't do it! Call a qualified electrician.

## **FLOWING BUT NOT FLOODED**

### **Exterior Plumbing**

Locate your homeowner's main water shut-off valve. Be sure it is not leaking and is easily accessible and operating in case of an emergency. Fire ants are a common problem. Keep the cover in place and the enclosure cleaned out.

Inspect all exterior faucets for leaks. A single dripping faucet can waste hundreds of gallons of water a year. Also inspect for broken handles and the presence of backflow (anti-siphon) protection on each faucet. Backflow protection devices for exterior faucets are readily available and are intended to prevent contamination of drinking water caused by back siphoning. Before cold weather comes, unscrew, drain and store garden hoses inside for the winter. Install insulated covers on outside faucets to protect them from freezing weather. It is also wise to visually examine the main meter for evidence of movement. This may indicate leakage that might otherwise go unnoticed until significant damage has occurred.

Lawn sprinkler systems require regular maintenance. Periodically run through the stations with the manual controls, checking each station for broken or misdirected sprinkler heads, broken pipes and surface leaks. A properly adjusted system will result in less water in the street and greener grass. All systems are required to have backflow protection to protect drinking water supplies from contamination. Requirements vary from city to city, but it is important to know where your backflow protection is located and how to shut off the water supply for repairs or freeze protection. Check these components regularly for operation and water leaks. A qualified lawn irrigation contractor can help you better understand your system and learn how to maintain it.

### **Interior Plumbing**

Daily use of water faucets in the house should make it obvious when they are hard to turn off, start to drip or splatter water on countertops. Replacing faucet washers can usually repair dripping faucets. Sediment in many water systems can build up in faucet aerators, restricting water flow and splattering water. To solve this problem, unscrew the aerator from the faucet spout, disassemble it (keeping parts in proper order), rinse away sediment, reassemble and screw the aerator back on. Occasionally it may be necessary to replace the aerator to achieve proper performance.

Periodically inspect supply shut-off valves under sinks for proper operation, corrosion and leaks. A leaking or inoperable valve can create a lagoon of trouble if not caught and corrected early.

Occasionally fill sinks with water and watch them drain while the water continues to run. A properly draining sink will empty faster than it fills. At the same time, look under the sink (a good flashlight helps) for leaks in the drainpipes. Bathtubs should also drain faster than the water runs, so you're not standing in a lake while showering. Repairing these simple plumbing problems early can help avoid bigger problems later.

Another big water waster is a running toilet. Here's an easy test to see if you have a problem. Put a few drops of food coloring in your toilet tank—don't flush yet. If any color appears in the toilet bowl, you have a leak. Replacing the rubber flapper in your tank will cost only a few dollars and save hundreds of gallons of water a month. While the lid is off your toilet tank, check flush mechanisms, handles, chain flappers and ball cock valves. A poorly adjusted or worn ball cock valve (also called a fill valve) can also cause a toilet to run. Make sure your replacement ball cock valve is an anti-siphon type, where valve assembly is above the overflow tube in the toilet tank to avoid back siphoning and contamination of the drinking water supply. Check that the toilet bowl is firmly anchored to the floor, with no leaks between bowl and tank or at the water supply valve on the wall.

Water heaters should be visually inspected for leaks or corrosion at supply pipe fittings at the top of the tank, and for rust or corrosion on the tank or at the drain valve at its bottom. The temperature/pressure (T&P) relief valve at the top or side of the tank should be tested monthly for proper operation; however, before testing check for proper connection of the drainpipe to the T&P valve. Have the T&P valve replaced if no water is released or if the valve does not re-seat after testing. Gas-fired water heaters should be checked for excessive rust and scale on the burner compartment and for a bright blue flame. Check the flue vent pipe for damage and continuity through the ceiling and roof, and for proper centering over the draft hood. To avoid scalding and for maximum economy, the temperature on both gas and electric water heaters should be at the lowest possible setting that still provides hot water. Many plumbers recommend 120°F as a maximum setting.

**ENJOY YOUR NEW HOME AND PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS WITH THE INSPECTION REPORT OR YOUR HOME IN GENERAL. IT HAS BEEN A TRUE BLESSING WORKING WITH YOU DURING THIS PROCESS.**

**ATEX Inspects, LLC**