



The Building Inspector Newsletter

Issue 5, Volume 1

Our Services:

- Residential Home Inspections
- Commercial Property Assessments
- FHA Inspections & Certifications
- HUD 203k Consultations
- Radon Testing
- Construction Phase Inspections

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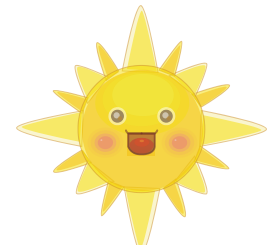
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Summer's Heating Up...

... And so is the Real Estate Market! Typically the start of summer is a time of weddings and graduations, a time to start anew. And with home prices dropping, along with the interest rates, what better time to go out a look for that new home?

... And, after 6 years attending Cleveland State Fenn Engineering School, Dan has begun to expand his horizons by joining the City of Westlake's Engineering Department as a summer intern. There he is able to apply what he has learned,

along with gaining additional knowledge. He really enjoys it and hopes to incorporate what he has learned into our Inspection services.



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Backyard Safety for the 4th

With the 4th of July fast approaching, many will have backyard barbeques. With 7,000 Americans injured each year, we have some safety tips to keep you and your family safe while cooking out.



1. Keep the grill at least 10 feet away from the house.
2. Clean the grill regularly.
3. Check for gas leaks by rubbing a 50/50 mix of liquid dish soap and water on the hoses and connections.
4. Keep decorations away from the grill.
5. Keep water and/or a fire extinguisher handy.
6. Never leave the grill unattended.
7. Never turn on the gas grill with the lid closed; gas can buildup causing an explosion when lit.
8. Never leave the grill unattended.

Have a happy and safe 4th of July holiday!

Sump Pumps

With all of the rain we have had this spring, I am sure you or someone you know has been affected in some way.

Unfortunately, a lot of homes have suffered with water coming into their basements and/or crawl spaces.

A **sump pump** is a small pump installed in the lowest part of a basement or crawlspace. Its job is to help keep the area under the building dry and to prevent it from flooding. Usually, sump pumps are installed in specially constructed sump pits. Water flows into the sump pit through drains or by natural water migration through the soil. The sump pump's job is to pump the water out of the pit and away from the building so the basement or crawlspace stays dry.

According to the American Society of Home Inspectors, more than 60 percent of American homes suffer from below-ground wetness. It doesn't take much water to cause thousands of dollars of damage. A moist basement can also lead to mold and mildew growth, bringing with it all its related health and breathing hazards.

So how does a sump pump keep the water out -- and what do you do if it stops working?

Sump pumps on the whole are quite reliable. But as with any other important piece of equipment, regular maintenance is always a good idea. Spend a few minutes every couple of months, when heavy rains are forecast and in early spring to ensure reliable sump pump operation. Basic sump pump

maintenance is usually as simple as doing these few jobs.

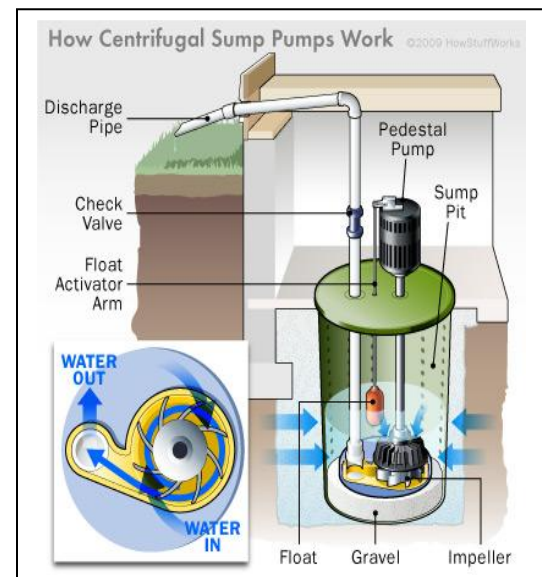
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- Make sure the pump is plugged in to a working ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet and the cord is in good shape. In damp areas, GFCI breakers may trip, effectively shutting off the sump pump. Check in on your sump pump periodically so you can reset the GFCI if necessary.
- Ensure the pump itself is standing upright. Vibrations during operation can cause it to fall or tilt onto one side. This can jam the float arm so it can't activate the pump.
- Periodically pour a bucket of water into the pit to make sure the pump starts automatically and the water drains quickly once the pump is on. If the pump doesn't start, have it serviced.
- Physically remove a submersible pump from the pit and clean the grate on the bottom. The sucking action of the pump can

pull small stones into the grate, blocking the inlet or damaging the pump over time.

- Ensure the outlet pipes are tightly joined together and draining out at least 20 feet (6 meters) away from your foundation.
- Make sure the vent hole in the discharge pipe is clear.

Sump pumps with backup battery power are also commonly available. The backup power comes from a car battery -- or even better, a deep cycle boat battery. Most of the systems charge the batteries while the power is on, ensuring the battery is fully charged in the event of a power outage. Alternatively, a trickle charger used for car batteries can be used.



Save money by unplugging . . .

Your appliances and other electronic devices consume electricity even when they are off -- especially, newer devices that just go into the standby mode as opposed to being off. One of the simplest ways to lower electricity bill is to unplug these devices when they're not in use. Take a look around your home, and you'll probably find at least a few things you can unplug. The usual culprits are chargers, computers, digital clocks, TVs, DVD players, cable

boxes, microwaves, and stereo systems. To keep it simple, you can plug them into a power strip and turn the strip off when they are not in use.



Update on Mike

As some of you know, Michael had surgery at the Cleveland Clinic April 13th to replace a section of his *aorta* that had a tear and aneurysm.

After 12 days in the Cleveland Clinic, 14 days in Westlake, and the remainder at home amongst nature at it's finest, he is feeling well enough to resume business.

We are going to schedule appointments when Dan can be present the entire time. These will be weekdays at 6pm, Saturday afternoons, and Sundays.

Attic and Roof Venting for Summer

During the summer, sunshine produces a build-up of heat in the roof materials. Some of this heat is radiated into the space under the roof sheathing. Part of this heat accumulates in the ceiling insulation and will be transferred into the living space, causing higher indoor temperatures and increased air conditioning costs.

High temperatures in the roof sheathing can lead to distortion and deterioration of the roof shingles. Attic venting, along with other measures such as light-colored shingles, can help reduce summer roof deck temperatures.

Attic fans are intended to cool hot attics by drawing in cooler outside air from attic vents (soffit and gable)

and pushing hot air to the outside. However, if your attic has blocked soffit vents and is not well-sealed from the rest of the house, attic fans will suck cool conditioned air up out of the house and into the attic. This will use more energy and make your air conditioner work harder, which will increase your summer utility bill.



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