

DE Home Inspections

Website: <http://dehomeinspections.net>

Email: martymuth@gmail.com

Phone: (908) 239-4081

554 Rutgers Court

Brick, NJ 08723

Inspector: Martin Muth

New Jersey license # 24GI00100900



Summary



Client(s): **Client**

Property address: **Client**

Inspection date: **Thursday, January 01, 2009**

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Concerns are shown and sorted according to these types:

	Safety	Poses a risk of injury or death
	Major Defect	Correction likely involves a significant expense
	Repair/Replace	Recommend repairing or replacing
	Repair/Maintain	Recommend repair and/or maintenance
	Minor Defect	Correction likely involves only a minor expense
	Maintain	Recommend ongoing maintenance

	Evaluate	Recommend evaluation by a specialist
	Monitor	Recommend monitoring in the future
	Comment	For your information
	Conducive conditions	Conditions conducive for wood destroying insects or organisms (Wood-soil contact, shrubs in contact with siding, roof or plumbing leaks, etc.)

Grounds

2  - The self-closing devices on one or more gates used with the fencing were missing. This is a safety hazard because these devices are intended to control access to areas with a drowning hazard. Recommend that a qualified person repair as necessary and per standard building practices.

3  - A swimming pool and/or spa were installed on the premises. Pools, spas and related pumps, heaters, filters, electric or gas-fired systems, buildings, decks, landings and stairs are specialty systems and are excluded from this inspection. Comments in this report related to pools, spas and related equipment are made as a courtesy only and are not meant to be a substitute for a full evaluation by a qualified specialist. Many potential safety, maintenance and/or repair issues related to the pool and/or spa may exist. Recommend the following:

- Have a qualified specialist fully evaluate the pool and/or spa, and related systems as mentioned above
- Consult with the property owner about past maintenance and repairs, and review available documentation about installed systems
- Research safety and maintenance issues related to pools and spas

For more information, visit:

<http://www.google.com/search?q=pool+and+spa+maintenance+and+safety+issues>

4  - Significant cracks, deterioration, leaning and/or bowing were found in one or more retaining walls. Recommend that a qualified contractor evaluate and repair or replace sections as necessary. Note that some retaining walls, based on their height or size, may require evaluation by a structural engineer. Note that such repairs are often expensive.

Exterior and Foundation

5  - One or more minor cracks (1/8 inch or less) were found in the foundation. These didn't appear to be a structural concern, but recommend sealing them to prevent water infiltration and monitor them in the future. Numerous products exist to seal such cracks including hydraulic cement, non-shrinking grout, resilient caulks and epoxy sealants.

6   - Vegetation such as trees, shrubs and/or vines was in contact with or close to the building exterior. Vegetation can serve as a pathway for wood-destroying insects and can retain moisture against the exterior after it rains. This is a conducive condition for wood-destroying organisms. Recommend pruning, moving or removing vegetation as necessary to maintain at least 6 inches of space between it and the building exterior. A 1-foot clearance is better.

7   - Trees were in contact with or were close to the building at one or more locations. Damage to the building can occur, especially during high winds. Recommend that a qualified tree service contractor or certified arborist remove trees as necessary to prevent damage to the building exterior.

Crawl Space

8    - The facing on fiberglass batt insulation in the crawl space was exposed. In most cases, the facing is flammable and poses a fire hazard. Also, the facing typically acts as a vapor barrier, and if located away from the interior surfaces can trap moisture from condensation in the cavity between the facing and the interior spaces. This can be a conducive condition for wood-destroying organisms. Recommend that a qualified person repair as necessary. For example, by reinstalling or replacing insulation per standard building practices and per the manufacturer's instructions.

Note that the inspector was unable to evaluate areas obscured by insulation to determine if any damage (e.g. rot, insect infestation) has already occurred due to moisture accumulation. When insulation repairs are made, recommend that the exposed structure be evaluated and repairs made if necessary.

- 9  - Stains were found on sill plate and joist in southwest corner. Although they were dry, this could indicate past water intrusion. Recommend that a qualified contractor evaluate and repair as necessary. All rotten wood should be replaced.

Basement

- 10  - Handrails at one or more flights of stairs were missing. This is a potential fall hazard. Handrails should be installed at stairs with four or more risers or where stairs are greater than 30 inches high. Recommend that a qualified contractor install handrails where missing and per standard building practices.

Roof

- 11  - The roof surface appeared to be near the end of its service life and will likely need replacing in the near future. Recommend discussing replacement options with a qualified contractor, and budgeting for a replacement roof surface in the near future.
- 12  - Caulking was deteriorated around one or more skylights. Consult with the property owner to determine if leaks have occurred, or if repairs have been made. Recommend that a qualified contractor evaluate and repair as necessary.

Attic and Roof Structure

- 13  - The pull-down attic stairs were not insulated. Typically, such stairs that are not insulated also do not have any weatherstripping installed. Recommend that a qualified person install insulation and weatherstripping per standard building practices for better energy efficiency. For more information, visit:
<http://www.google.com/search?q=insulate+attic+stairs>
- 14  - One or more attic access hatches or doors were not insulated, or had substandard insulation. Weatherstripping was also missing or substandard. Recommend installing weatherstripping and insulation per current standards at hatches or doors for better energy efficiency. For more information, visit:
<http://www.reporthost.com/docs/atticaccess.pdf>

Garage or Carport

- 17  - One or more gaps, holes were found in the attached garage walls or ceilings. Current standard building practices call for wooden-framed ceilings and walls that divide the house and garage to provide limited fire-resistance rating to prevent the spread of fire from the garage to the house. Recommend that a qualified person repair per standard building practices. For example, by patching openings or holes, firestopping holes or gaps with fire-resistant caulking, and/or installing fire-resistant wall covering (e.g. Type X drywall). For more information, visit:
<http://www.google.com/search?q=attached+garage+fire+resistance>
- 18  - The self-closing device on the door between the garage and the house was missing. These devices are installed to keep the door closed to prevent possible fire and fumes from the garage from spreading to the house. Recommend that a qualified person repair as necessary.
- 19  - Glass in one or more windows was cracked, broken and/or missing. Recommend that a qualified contractor replace glass where necessary.
- 20  - One or more windows that were designed to open and close were difficult to open and close. Recommend that a qualified person repair windows as necessary so they open and close easily.

Electric

- 21  - One or more electric receptacles (outlets) at the kitchen, pool had no visible ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection, or the inspector was unable to determine if GFCI protection was present. If not GFCI-protected, receptacles in wet areas pose a shock hazard. Recommend that a qualified electrician evaluate and install GFCI protection if necessary and per standard building practices. General guidelines for GFCI-protected receptacles include the following locations:

- Outdoors (since 1973)
- Bathrooms (since 1975)

- Garages (since 1978)
- Kitchens (since 1987)
- Crawl spaces and unfinished basements (since 1990)
- Wet bar sinks (since 1993)
- Laundry and utility sinks (since 2005)

For more information, visit:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/099.pdf>

22  - Extension cords were being used as permanent wiring at one or more locations. They should only be used for portable equipment on a temporary basis. Using extension cords as permanent wiring is a potential fire and shock hazard, and indicates that wiring is inadequate and needs updating. Extension cords may be undersized. Connections may not be secure resulting in power fluctuations, damage to equipment, overheating and sparks that could start a fire. Recommend that a qualified electrician repair per standard building practices and eliminate extension cords for permanently installed equipment.

23  - One or more ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) type receptacles (outlets) had an open ground. GFCI receptacles will work (trip) without a ground; but a 3-slot receptacle on an open ground circuit can result in appliances that require a ground can be used without one. This is a potential shock hazard. Recommend that a qualified electrician upgrade circuits that require GFCI protection (e.g. in wet areas) with grounded wiring per standard building practices.

24  - 2-slot receptacles (outlets) rather than 3-slot, grounded receptacles were installed in one or more areas. These do not have an equipment ground and are considered unsafe by today's standards. Appliances that require a ground should not be used with 2-slot receptacles. Examples of such appliances include computers and related hardware, refrigerators, freezers, portable air conditioners, clothes washers, aquarium pumps, and electrically operated gardening tools. The client should be aware of this limitation when planning use for various rooms, such as an office. Upgrading to grounded receptacles typically requires installing new wiring from the main service panel or sub-panel to the receptacle(s), in addition to replacing the receptacle(s). Consult with a qualified electrician about upgrading to 3-wire, grounded circuits.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition (HVAC)

28  - Corrosion was found in one or more distribution supply valves, fittings for the heating system. This can indicate past leaks, or that leaks are likely to occur in the future. Recommend that a qualified heating contractor or plumber evaluate and repair as necessary.

29  - The last service date of the forced air cooling system appeared to be more than 1 year ago, or the inspector was unable to determine the last service date. Ask the property owner when it was last serviced. If unable to determine the last service date, or if this system was serviced more than 1 year ago, recommend that a qualified HVAC contractor service this system and make repairs if necessary. Because this system has a compressor and refrigerant system, this servicing should be performed annually in the future. Any needed repairs noted in this report should be brought to the attention of the contractor when it's serviced.

30  - Vegetation such as trees, shrubs and/or vines were too close to the heat pump or air conditioning condensing unit. There should be at least 12 inches of clearance on all sides and at least 4-6 feet above. Inadequate clearance around and above can result in reduced efficiency, increased energy costs and/or damage to equipment. Recommend pruning and/or removing vegetation as necessary.

Fireplaces, Stoves, Chimneys and Flues

33  - One or more gas-fired appliances such as a furnace or water heater used a masonry chimney for venting, and no metal flue liner was visible. Metal liners should be installed to prevent drafting problems from an over-sized flue, to prevent corrosive exhaust gases from damaging the masonry chimney, and to prevent exhaust gases from leaking through gaps or seams in the chimney. This is a potential safety hazard. Recommend that a qualified contractor repair per standard building practices. For example, by installing a metal liner. For more information search for "liner" at:

<http://www.csia.org/>

34  - Recommend that the client review all available documentation for gas-fired fireplaces and stoves. Depending on how they are operated (for routine heating versus ambiance), such appliances normally need servicing annually or every few years. Consult with the property owner and/or a qualified specialist to determine if service is needed now.

35  - One or more masonry chimney crowns were cracked. Crowns are meant to keep water off of the chimney structure and prevent damage from freeze-thaw cycles. Chimney crowns are commonly constructed by mounding concrete or mortar on the top chimney surface, however this is substandard. A properly constructed chimney crown should:

- Be constructed using either precast concrete slabs, cast-in-place steel reinforced concrete, solid stone, or metal
- Be sloped down from the flue a minimum of 3 inches of fall per foot of run
- Extend a minimum of 2 1/2 inches beyond the face of the chimney on all sides
- Not directly contact the flue liner (if installed), with the gap filled with flexible caulk
- Have flashing installed between the bottom of the crown and the top of the brick chimney

Recommend that a qualified contractor repair or replace crowns as necessary, and per standard building practices.

Kitchen

- 37  - One or more cabinets, drawers and/or cabinet doors were damaged or deteriorated. Recommend that a qualified person repair or replace as necessary.
- 38  - One or more cabinets were loose, or were secured with too few or substandard fasteners. An adequate number of appropriate fasteners should be used. For wall-hung cabinets, inadequate fasteners can pose a safety hazard if cabinets fall. Recommend that a qualified person repair as necessary.

Bathrooms, Laundry and Sinks

- 40  - The clothes washer was installed over a finished space or in an area where leaking can cause damage, and no catch pan or drain was installed. Catch pans and drains prevent water damage to finished interior spaces below if or when the washing machine leaks, overflows or is drained. If concerned, consult with a qualified contractor about installing these. Note that drain lines for catch pans are usually installed below the floor level and are difficult at best to install in an existing home.
- 41   - Gaps, no caulk, or substandard caulking were found between the bathtub and the floor at location(s) #E. Water may penetrate these areas and cause damage. Recommend that a qualified person re-caulk or install caulking as necessary.

Master Bath

- 42   - Tile and/or grout in the bathtub surround at location(s) #D, E was deteriorated (e.g. loose or cracked tiles, missing grout) or substandard. Water can damage the wall structure as a result. Recommend that a qualified contractor repair as necessary.
- 43  - Rubber water supply hoses were installed at the clothes washer. These hoses are prone to bursting when deteriorated, which can result in flooding and significant water damage. Recommend upgrading to braided, stainless steel hoses.

Interior, Doors and Windows

- 44  - One or more windows that were designed to open and close were difficult to open and close. Recommend that a qualified person repair windows as necessary so they open and close easily.
- 45  - Glass in one or more windows was cracked, broken and/or missing. Recommend that a qualified contractor replace glass where necessary.
- 46  - Minor cracks, nail pops and/or blemishes were found in walls and/or ceilings in one or more areas. Cracks and nail pops are common, are often caused by lumber shrinkage or minor settlement, and can be more or less noticeable depending on changes in humidity. They did not appear to be a structural concern, but the client may wish to repair these for aesthetic reasons. For recurring cracks, consider using an elastic crack covering product:
<http://www.google.com/search?q=elastic+crack+cover>