

Answers to some of your questions

There have been several times during my tenure as a home inspector when I have had the privilege of answering questions from home buyers, sellers, and the general public. Some of them are specifically related to the profession, others relate to home maintenance, and still others that wonder if I've got my head screwed on straight (actually, most of those are from family members). Following is a somewhat serious sampling of questions and answers that may help answer some of yours.

Q: How did you decide to become a home inspector?

A: The long version would take several pages. Short version- I enjoy building and construction, but don't enjoy wearing 7 layers of clothes to work for 5 months a year.

Q: How do you become a home inspector?

A: Indiana law requires you to pass a 60 hour course, field work, and a National Inspection Exam. A background in some type of construction field is important but not required by law.

Q: Did you study this in school?

A: No. My 5 year odyssey in college prepared me for, among other things, a career in elementary education-which I did for 6 long years.

Q: Do you work for the county?

A: No. The county inspectors are quite different than individual licensed home inspectors. We have no allegiance to anyone but our clients during an inspection and we follow a national set of inspection standards.

Q: Why is there water coming through my basement floor for the first time since I've lived here?

A: Unless you have been in Arizona for the last 6 months, you may have noticed high levels of water everywhere you drive. It is the same for local water tables underground. Water is being forced into areas under the concrete. Depending on the drainage capability of the foundation, water gets trapped in areas and seeps through any crack or opening in the basement. (Note: 90% of all water problems in basements are related to yard and roof-run off, not high water tables.)

Q: Does the age of the house have anything to do with the level of radon gas?

A: No. The type of soil, amount of uranium deposits in the soil, and type of foundation are some factors that will determine the level of radon gas.

Q: What is the strangest thing you have ever seen during an inspection?

A: Probably seeing a 12" thick tree growing out of one corner of the basement. Not typically what you want in a foundation.

Q: What is the scariest thing encountered in a crawlspace?

A: So far, only spiders, ants, a small harmless snake, and a cat.

Q: What is the hardest thing about the home inspection profession?

A: Probably the constant realization that when a home is inspected properly, in many cases, someone involved with the transaction will be unhappy.

Q: What are the best things about home inspecting?

A: The incredible variety of homes I get to see, people I get to meet, and the unpredictability of every inspection. Very few people get paid to examine nearly every square inch of someone else's house -kind of like a thief-only I give something in return.

If you have other questions: stupid, silly, serious, or specific, please e-mail me at goldkeyhi@maplenet.net.