



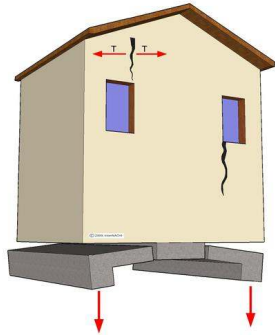
PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM WATER DAMAGE

Water may be essential to life, but, as a destructive force, water can diminish the value of your home.

Homes can suffer water damage that results in increased maintenance costs, decrease in the value of the property, and decline in indoor air quality. The best way to protect against this potential loss is to ensure that the building components are water-resistant and that the plumbing and ventilation systems operate efficiently and are well-maintained. These are some basic steps for identifying and eliminating potentially damaging excess moisture:

Identify and Repair All Leaks and Cracks

- ⊖ Check for **leaks** around your windows and doors.
- ⊖ Improper **drainage systems and roof sloping** reduce roof life and become a primary source of moisture intrusion. Leaks are also common around vents for exhaust or plumbing.
- ⊖ Seal any **cracks and holes** in exterior walls, joints and foundations which often develop naturally because of soil settlement.
- ⊖ Check for **leaking** plumbing fixtures, dripping pipes, clogged drains (both interior and exterior), and defective water drainage systems.



- ⊖ **Heating and air conditioning** (HVAC) systems are a crucial component to maintaining a healthy, comfortable environment. They are comprised of a number of components that can directly contribute to excessive moisture. An improperly operating HVAC system will not perform this function.

Prevent Water Intrusion with Good Maintenance

- ⊖ **Flashing**, which is typically a thin metal strip found around doors, windows and roofs, are designed to prevent water intrusion in spaces where two building materials come together. Sealants and caulking are specifically applied to prevent moisture intrusion at building joints. Both must be maintained and in good condition.
- ⊖ All **vents** should have appropriate hoods, exhaust to the exterior, and be in good working order.
- ⊖ The **relative humidity** in your building should be between 30% and 50%. Condensation on windows, wet stains on walls and ceilings, and musty smells are signs that relative humidity may be high. If you are concerned about a humidity level, consult with a mechanical engineer, contractor or air-conditioning repair company to determine if your HVAC system is properly sized and in good working order.

Continued on Page Two

Such A Deal

Most sellers know that buyers are attracted to homes that are spotlessly clean, well-maintained and tastefully decorated. Sometimes the seller can't make the extra effort to prepare the home for showing. Some real estate listings are being sold to settle estates or by someone who has been transferred unexpectedly and didn't have time to complete the necessary cosmetic repairs. Homes that need work are often exceptional values.

When a real estate agent shows you a house that needs help, try to imagine how it would look with new carpet, a fresh coat of paint and your furniture settled inside. Because the condition and overall appeal of a house have such an impact on the selling price, "fixer-uppers" are often priced lower than comparable homes. If the home is structurally sound and has updated systems, a small investment of "elbow grease" and paint could make it look fabulous.



Packing Tip

Use foam trays from packages of meat and other foods to slip between plates or around other breakables when packing

Money Laundering

Paper money is not made from wood pulp but from cotton. This means that it will not disintegrate as fast if it is put in the laundry.

Scuff Marks

Rub scuff marks from floors and fingerprints from woodwork with a rubber or art-gum eraser.

Monkey Food

Take your bananas apart when you get home from the store. If you leave them connected at the stem, they ripen faster.

Valentine Trivia

Every second, Americans collectively eat one hundred pounds of chocolate.

WATER DAMAGE CONT.

- ⊡ If **expansion joints** (materials between bricks, pipes and other building materials that absorb movement) are not in good condition, water intrusion can occur.
- ⊡ Replace **drywall, plaster, carpet and stained or water-damaged ceiling tiles**. These are good evidence of a moisture intrusion problem and can lead to deterioration of the environment, if they remain over time.
- ⊡ **Exterior walls** are the first line of defense between water and the interior of your building. It is essential that they be maintained properly (including regular refinishing and/or resealing with the correct materials).

Act Quickly if Water Intrusion Occurs

Label shut-off valves so that the water supply can be easily closed in the event of a plumbing leak. If water intrusion does occur, you can minimize the damage by addressing the problem quickly and thoroughly. Immediately remove standing water and all moist materials, and consult with a professional. Should your building become damaged by a catastrophic event, such as fire, flood or storm, take appropriate action to prevent further water damage, once it is safe to do so. This may include boarding up damaged windows, covering a damaged roof with plastic sheeting, and/or removing wet materials and supplies. Fast action on your part will help minimize the time and expense for repairs, resulting in a faster recovery.

**HOME INSPECTION
NIGHTMARES!**

Got Milk? The many uses of milk crates.

courtesy of the ASHI Reporter



Happy Valentine's Day!