



Stoffer Inspections'

Insight

Insight from the Area's Leader in Home Inspections

Stoffer
Inspections, L.C.



Member

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Current (Electrical) Events

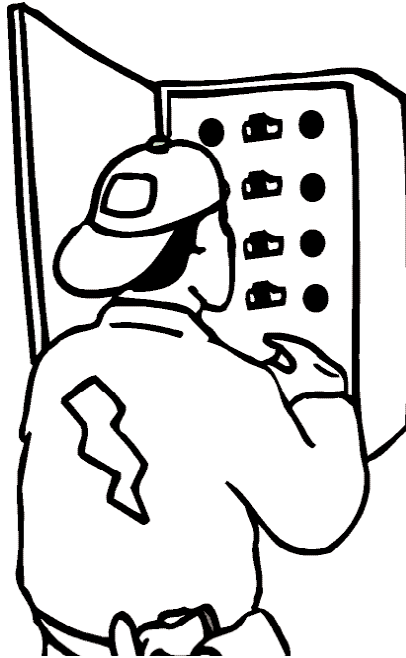
The electrical systems in many older homes are dated and cannot properly accommodate present day living standards. Home builders and electricians in the 1940's had no idea of the present array of electrical appliances and equipment used on a daily basis. So what's the difference? Most importantly:

1. Newer systems have more power. Most new homes have 150 or 200 amperes of power available, while old homes may have as little as one-eighth this amount.
2. Circuitry is distributed better in newer homes. Most homes built in the 60's or later have a separate circuit for the disposal, the dishwasher, the boiler and other major appliances.
3. The spacing of receptacles is more convenient. Many older systems have only one dangling overhead light and one convenience receptacle.

Convenience outlets really live up to their name when they are no more than 12 feet apart so there isn't a need for extension cords.

4. Newer homes have safer and more protective receptacle devices. If a system was installed after 1962, utilized polarized plugs with a ground hole to accommodate grounded appliance plugs were used. Systems installed after 1978 are better still, incorporating especially sensitive breakers (known as ground fault interrupt devices) to provide extra protection against shock or electrocution.

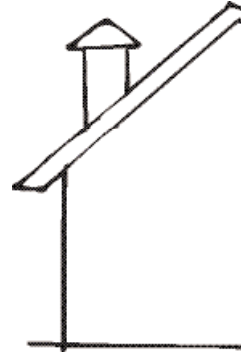
Okay, so new systems are better. What should a homeowner do if he has an older system in his house? Here's some suggestions to cope with an out-of-date but still functioning system:



- Very old "knob and tube" systems – unfortunately, these should be replaced in their entirety. The existing system has no provision for grounding and may have many poor connections where additional branch circuitry has been spliced into the original wiring. Best advice: find an electrician who is capable of "fishing" wires. This could save money in labor costs.
- Inadequate power – This is a common problem, in which the electrical needs or demands of a household have outgrown the capacity of the entrance cable or the distribution panel. A heavy up to bring in more power and allow for increased circuitry distribution is a good solution here. A homeowner may also need to run additional circuits to high-volume areas, such as the kitchen, air conditioners and bathrooms.

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Siding & Older Homes



What is the best way to install siding on an older home? Well, first the owner should

realize that – despite its name - insulated siding does not insulate, because air gets trapped behind the siding. If that air is 20 degrees – as it may be in winter – it would not matter if there was 2 inches of insulation on the siding. The cold air would keep the house colder, too.

The best approach to siding work is to wrap the home with the DuPont product "Tyvek". This will not allow air to pass through, although it does allow moisture to pass. This is one method to stopping the cold air from having access to interior walls. It is important that a homeowner remembers that the only purpose of siding is to keep weather off of the house. It will not insulate the home. ☹☹☹

Home on the Web

It's never too soon to be prepared for any emergency. Check out these disaster-preparedness sites to be ready for any event.

American Red Cross

redcross.org

Homeland Security

ready.gov

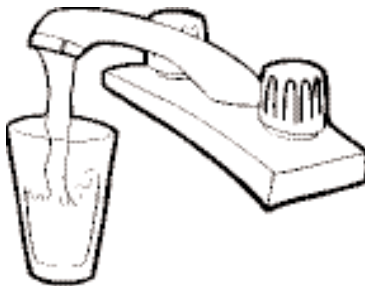
Centers of Disease Control and Prevention

bt.cdc.gov

Why It's Smart To Get a Water Test

There are various reasons for a property owner to test water. Suggest the following to your clients:

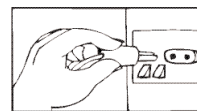
1. Water should be tested if you're thinking of purchasing a home and want to assess the quality of the water supply. It is also important to know the total coliform bacteria, lead, iron, nitrate, manganese, sodium chloride and arsenic in the water. Hardness and pH level should also be determined before making a purchase.
2. Test water if it has an undesirable taste or smell. This could indicate the presence of hydrogen sulfide, pH, copper, lead, iron or chloride.
3. If the pipes on a home show signs of corrosion, test the water for lead, iron manganese and copper.
4. A test for hardness is needed if water leaves soap scum or scaly residue and is ineffective in cleaning.
5. If contamination is suspected, one should test for fecal coliform bacteria, nitrate, chloride and detergents.



6. If using well water from a well which is located near an operational or abandoned gas station or buried fuel tanks, test for fuel components of volatile organic compounds. Test for the same if your water smells like fuel oil or gasoline.
7. If the well is in an area of intensive agricultural use, testing for pesticides, coliform bacteria, nitrates and pH is appropriate.
8. Test for chlorides, sodium and total dissolved solids if a well is located near seawater, a roadsalt storage site, or a heavily salted roadway and the water is salty to the taste. 🏠 🏠 🏠

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- **Two hole receptacles** – These receptacles were not designed to be grounded (though often the cover plate screw is). Some older ones aren't able to be polarized as well. Modern systems, especially those serving electronic equipment, are usually grounded and polarized. Three hole polarized receptacles can often be adapted to the older two hole systems as long as a ground conductor exists. This work should be done by a professional.
- **No ground fault interrupts** – If a system was installed after 1978, it probably includes especially sensitive circuit breakers that are in potential wet or damp locations, such as the bathroom and garage. These breakers trip quickly whenever more than five milliamps of leakage to the ground has been detected. A professional electrician can retrofit individual devices if the system predates 1978.



This newsletter contains basic information on the home and general topics of interest. Due to the variations in homes, individual recommendations require a comprehensive evaluation. To reprint any article in this newsletter, please contact our office. © 1996-2003. All rights reserved. (ISND04)

Stoffer Inspections, L.C. Information

Dave Stoffer provides inspections and is able to explain them to all clients on the most common terms. Stoffer Inspections, L.C. provides 3-D computer generated narrative reports that are both quick and comprehensive. My service also provides digital photography services for complete record keeping. Each Home Inspection includes an evaluation of roofing, electrical, heating and a/c, built in appliances that stay with the home, plumbing and visual structure. Radon screening and septic system inspections are available.

Dave is a certified member of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) #11750, a charter member and former board member of the Great Plains Chapter of ASHI, and a member of the Pro ASHI Chapter. To obtain certification, members must perform a minimum of 250 home inspections and pass a series of written tests that cover both mechanical and structural aspects of a home. Once certified, members must maintain at least 20 hours of continuing education each year. All of these requirements ensure that your clients will receive a thorough, experienced, ethical and knowledgeable home inspection.



Certified Member of the
American Society of Home Inspectors

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**Meet Your Home
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