

## INTERIOR

The home interior's prime function is to provide comfortable and safe living spaces for the occupants. It is important that the interior of the home be constructed and maintained to be water resistant and durable. This living space should ideally be constructed to provide all of the necessary systems in the appropriate places within the home. For instance, heating supplied to all living areas and plumbing supplied in bathrooms, kitchens, and laundry rooms etc.

### DESCRIPTION

**Insulation** serves to help reduce the home's heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer. Commonly used insulating materials include fiberglass, mineral wool, and cellulose. Fiberglass and mineral wool can be installed in loose form (blown/poured) or in batt form (cut for friction fit between structural members). Cellulose is only installed in loose form. Vermiculite is a loose fill poured insulation which may contain asbestos and may require further investigation with a specialist. Insulation usually lasts the lifetime of the home unless damaged by moisture penetration or other means.

**Ventilation** serves to help reduce moisture build-up within the home. Effective ventilation within the home is important because excess moisture can have expensive consequences to the home's finishes and structure. Ventilation can be achieved either through passive (air vents etc.) or active means (ventilation fans). It is not uncommon for an inspection to pinpoint insufficient ventilation in attics, basement/crawl spaces, kitchens or bathrooms.

**Ceilings & Walls** conceal the building structure on the upper and vertical surfaces of interior spaces. From an inspection viewpoint, ceilings and walls may offer clues to structural or water leakage concerns. Commonly used covering materials are drywall, plaster, wood, tile and paneling. It is not uncommon for a stucco or textured finish to be applied on drywall or plaster ceilings. These added finishes, while cosmetically appealing to some, offer additional sound diffusion qualities.

**Floors** conceal the building structure on the lower horizontal surfaces of each level of living space. From an inspection viewpoint, floors may offer clues to structural deficiencies as well as water leakage problems. Commonly used floor coverings include wood, carpet, ceramic tile or resilient flooring. Marble, stone and slate coverings are relatively uncommon and are considered high end products.

**Vapour Retarder** is used to help ensure a seal between the interior of the house and the exterior wall and ceiling structures. The most common material used today is plastic/poly and it is applied between insulation and the interior finishes. The vapour retarder would be commonly visible as the plastic covering in front of the basement wall insulation in most newer homes.

**Stairs** serve as a means of travel from one level to another of the structure. Stairs should be properly designed with reasonable slopes, railings and steps to provide safe passage. The most common material used in stair construction is wood.

**Doors** in the interior of a home serve to offer privacy to selected areas or rooms. They can also offer sound dampening qualities to improve the overall enjoyment of the home. Doors come in a variety of configurations which serve many different purposes. They are most commonly constructed of wood.

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**Basement/Crawlspace** commonly describes the below grade level of a home. This level is normally home to the heating, plumbing and electrical services. Basements often serve as storage space, however, it is not uncommon to see them finished for additional living space. A basement/crawlspace, by definition of being a below grade area, is always vulnerable to moisture penetration. For more information on reducing basement/crawlspace moisture vulnerability, you may wish to refer to section 12.0 later in the "Interior" section.

**Fireplaces** and wood stoves can add both warmth and ambience to a living space. For safety sake, they should be properly designed, installed and maintained. Masonry and metal are the two most common construction materials used in fireplaces and the most common fuels are wood and gas.

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### RESTRICTIONS

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**Storage:** Storage in the home has restricted the inspector from completing a thorough visual inspection of the home. The storage restriction may range from one isolated area up to a substantial portion of the home. The inspector may be unable to comment on areas not thoroughly inspected.

**Furnishings:** Furnishings in the home have restricted the inspector from completing a thorough visual inspection of the home. The furnishings restriction may range from one isolated area up to a substantial portion of the home. The inspector may be unable to comment on areas not thoroughly inspected.

**Newer Paint/Finishes:** New or newer paint or finishes in the home have restricted the inspector from completing a thorough visual inspection of the home. Since these items may have been applied to conceal damage, it may be impossible to discover such damage without removing these finishes. Removal of the finishes is beyond the scope of a home inspection. The new paint/finishes restriction may range from one isolated area up to a substantial portion of the home. The inspector may be unable to comment on areas not thoroughly inspected.

**Attic Hatch - Not Found/None/Too Small/Sealed:** No attic hatch was found or the attic hatch was sealed or too small for the inspector to gain access to the attic area(s). The inspector may be unable to comment on areas not thoroughly inspected.

**Access Denied To \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_:** The inspector was denied permission to inspect certain areas of the home. This intervention may have come from a person like the vendor, tenant or their representative(s) and/or things like locks, excess storage etc. Your inspector may have noted who/what denied access in the restrictions box on the reporting page. The inspector may be unable to comment on areas not thoroughly inspected.

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## INSPECTION FINDINGS

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**BASEMENT MOISTURE INDICATORS:** *Please* read section 12.0

Basement/Crawlspace commonly describes the below grade level of a home. This level is normally home to the heating, plumbing and electrical services. Basements often serve as storage space. However, it is not uncommon to see them finished for additional living space. A basement/crawl space, by definition of being a below grade area, is always vulnerable to moisture

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penetration. For more information on reducing basement/crawl space moisture vulnerability, please read section 12.0.

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### NOTES

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**Add/Upgrade Railings - Now - Safety at \_\_\_\_\_:** If this check box has been checked by your inspector, it was done to bring to your attention the importance of following through on this item. Failure to do so in a timely fashion could result in serious safety consequences and potentially significant legal liabilities.

**Clean/Review Fireplace/Chimney – Now – Safety:** If this check box has been checked by your inspector, it was done to bring to your attention the possible safety concerns with the fireplace(s)/chimney(s). For example, a wood fireplace that has been well used will likely have some soot/creosote build-up which makes it virtually impossible for your inspector to properly evaluate it's condition. In this case it's advisable to have a professional review/clean the fireplace(s)/chimney(s) before use to ensure their safety. Also note that glass, metal & other fireplace surfaces can get dangerously hot when the fireplace is in operation. Obviously, caution is strongly recommended as these hot surfaces can cause personal injuries.

**Safety: Test/Upgrade/Install Smoke Detectors Upon Occupancy!** This note is here to remind you of the importance of following through on this item. Smoke detectors can save lives. Failure to do so in a timely fashion could result in serious safety consequences and potentially significant legal liabilities. This note is repeated for you on the "Electrical" notes page as a reminder.

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### 1.0 INSULATION

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Insulation serves to help reduce the home's heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer. Commonly used insulating materials include fiberglass, mineral wool, and cellulose. Fiberglass and mineral wool can be installed in loose form (blown/poured) or in batt form (cut for friction fit between structural members). Cellulose is only installed in loose form. Insulation usually lasts the lifetime of the home unless damaged by moisture penetration or other means.

- ◆ **Amount** - The insulation may be insufficient or there may be benefits to increasing the amount present. The beauty of increasing the amount of your insulation is that it is a one time cost item. It doesn't wear out and the benefits can be enjoyed for the lifetime of the home. Provided of course it does not become damaged by moisture penetration or other means.
- ◆ **Asbestos** - The inspector suspects the presence of asbestos in the home. This can not be confirmed without laboratory analysis of a sample. Asbestos removal from the home is best left to professional qualified asbestos removal contractors. The issue with asbestos is one of health and safety.
- ◆ **Disturbed** - The insulation appears to have been disturbed. This can hinder its ability to provide proper insulating benefits. Insulation should be uniform in depth and density throughout the space. This is small dollar fix but important to keep the heating/cooling bills from going up and the comfort levels from going down.
- ◆ **Missing** - The insulation appears to be missing in one or more locations. This could result in dramatically increased energy costs for heating and cooling the home. Failure to correct this problem could result in unnecessary expensive and lower the comfort levels in the home.

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- ♦ **Pest Evidence** - There appears to be pest evidence in and/or around the insulation. The degree of the concern can range from the appearance of animal droppings to insulation shredding and displacement. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Storage** - There is storage, or evidence of past storage, which has compressed the insulation and this can hinder its ability to provide proper insulating benefits. Insulation should be uniform in depth and density throughout the space. The insulating value of insulation comes from the fact that it is a low density material and its value is compromised when it is compressed. It is never advisable to store items on insulation.
- ♦ **Uffi** - There appears to be Uffi in the home. The presence of this type of insulation can negatively affect the value of the home. Uffi is short form for "Urea Formaldehyde Foam Insulation". This is a retrofit insulation that was used in numerous homes in Canada between 1975 - 1980. Its use was banned due to public perceptions about health risks. This type of inspection is limited to the readily accessible aspects of the home. Without completely dismantling the home, it is impossible to state unequivocally that there is absolutely no UFFI in this home.
- ♦ **Uneven** - The insulation appears to be uneven. The difference between disturbed (see above) and uneven is that uneven suggests poor installation of the material. This can hinder its ability to provide proper insulating benefits. Insulation should be uniform in depth and quantity throughout the space. This is usually a small dollar fix but important to keep the heating/cooling bills from going up and the comfort levels from going down.
- ♦ **Unsafe?** - There appears to be some concern with the safety of the insulation. An example could be exposed fiberglass insulation in the living spaces of the home which can allow fibers to become airborne and inhaled by occupants of the home. It is not considered an unsafe condition in an attic, unless regularly accessed by occupants of the home. Another example could be exposed Styrofoam type insulation which can emit toxic fumes in a fire situation. Unsafe, exposed insulation should be appropriately covered or removed. You may wish to consult a professional before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Wet** - The insulation appears to be wet or shows evidence of being wet in the past. The result of water in insulation is that it will compress and, to the degree it compresses, will lose its insulating qualities. Wet insulation may also be holding moisture next to wooden structural members causing concern and/or damage to those members. This condition can also promote mold growth in the home which may have health implications for the occupants of the home.

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### 1.1 VAPOUR RETARDER

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Vapour retarders serve to help ensure a seal between the interior of the house and the exterior wall and ceiling structures. The most common material used today is plastic/poly and it is applied between insulation and the interior finishes. The vapour retarder would be commonly visible as the plastic covering in front of the basement wall insulation in most newer homes.

- ♦ **Damaged** - The vapour retarder appears to be damaged in some way. This could include being torn, cut, loose or falling off (i.e. any damage that would allow moisture to pass into the

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insulation or the wall/ceiling structure.) Failure to correct this concern could result in unnecessary and expensive rot and/or water damage problems.

- ◆ **Incomplete** - The vapour retarder appears to be incomplete. This could pose a weakness through which moisture can pass leading to rot or water damage to the wall or ceiling structure. Failure to correct this problem could result in unnecessary and expensive rot and/or water damage problems.
- ◆ **Location** - The vapour retarder appears to be installed in a wrong or unsuitable location. An example would be its installation on the cold (exterior) side of the insulation rather than the interior (warm) side of the insulation. Failure to correct this problem could result in unnecessary and expensive rot and/or water damage problems.
- ◆ **Missing** - The vapour retarder appears to be missing. This could pose a weakness through which moisture can pass. Failure to correct this problem could result in unnecessary and expensive rot and/or water damage problems.
- ◆ **Seal** - The seal of the vapour retarder appears to be compromised in some way. This could refer to either the lack of “tuck” tape at the seams or lack of sealant at the top or bottom plates. This could pose a weakness through which moisture can pass leading to rot and/or water damage to the wall or ceiling structure. Failure to correct this problem could result in unnecessary and expensive repairs.

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## 2.0 VENTILATION

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Ventilation serves to help reduce moisture build-up within the home. Effective ventilation within the home is important because excess moisture can have expensive consequences to the home's finishes and structure. Ventilation can be achieved either through passive (air vents etc.) or active means (ventilation fans). It is not uncommon for an inspection to pinpoint insufficient ventilation in attics, basement/crawl spaces, kitchens or bathrooms.

- ◆ **Amount** - The ventilation may be insufficient or there may be benefits to increasing the amount present. The benefit to increasing the amount of ventilation is that it will improve the air flow in the area which may add to the homes comfort levels while reducing air conditioning loads. The prime significance of inadequate ventilation is the possibility that it may trap moisture in the area and cause damage to structural elements or finishes. It is usually less expensive to improve ventilation than it is to pay for repairs that may result from this condition.
- ◆ **Blocked** - The ventilation appears to be blocked or compromised in one or more areas. This can range from improperly sized cut outs behind roof vents to obstructions like bird's nests etc. in vents or vent ducts. The prime significance of blocked or compromised ventilation is the possibility that it may trap moisture in the area and cause damage to structural elements or finishes. It is usually less expensive to improve ventilation than it is to pay for repairs that may result from this problem.
- ◆ **Duct** – There appears to be a concern with the duct in one or more locations in the home. This could mean the duct is missing, improperly sized or that the duct material itself is inappropriate. An example could be a plastic duct on the drier instead of a metal one. Plastic

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ducts on dryers tend to collect a lot of lint which increases the risk of fire. Failure to correct this could also result in poor ventilation from the home.

- ♦ **Missing** - There appears to be no accommodation for ventilation in one or more areas. The prime significance of inadequate ventilation is the possibility that it may trap moisture in the area and cause damage to structural elements or finishes. It is usually less expensive to improve ventilation than it is to pay for repairs that may result from this condition. Missing could also mean that a vent cap and/or grill is not in place. A missing vent cap and/or grill could allow animal entry into the home as well as be a moisture penetration concern.
- ♦ **Shared Duct** – There appears to be more than one device or machine connected to the same duct. This could greatly reduce the flow of ventilation from the home and introduces the possibility of one bathroom fan back flowing into another bathroom or a dryer, or vice versa. In this situation, it is recommended to have a direct duct to the exterior for each device.
- ♦ **Uneven** - The ventilation appears to be uneven in its distribution. Uneven ventilation can leave an area vulnerable to moisture retention concerns. The prime significance of inadequate ventilation is the possibility that it may trap moisture in the area and cause damage to structural elements or finishes. It is usually less expensive to improve ventilation than it is to pay for repairs that may result from this condition.

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### 3.0 CEILINGS/WALLS

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Ceilings conceal the building structure on the upper surfaces of interior spaces. From an inspection viewpoint, ceilings may offer clues to structural or water leakage concerns. Commonly used covering materials are drywall, plaster, wood, tile and paneling. It is not uncommon for a stucco or textured finish to be applied on drywall or plaster ceilings. These added finishes, while cosmetically appealing to some, offer additional sound diffusion qualities.

Walls conceal the building structure on the vertical surfaces of interior spaces. From an inspection viewpoint, walls may offer clues to structural or water leakage concerns. Commonly used covering materials are drywall, plaster, wood, tile and paneling. Although not common other textured coverings are sometimes used (i.e. stucco). These added finishes, while cosmetically appealing to some, offer additional sound diffusion qualities.

- ♦ **Cracked** - The ceiling/wall coverings appear to be cracked in one or more areas. Cracks are usually the result of normal settlement and wood shrinkage, but may also indicate an unusual stress being placed in the area. The stress can be the result of an unusually heavy snow load being transferred through roof joists to the ceiling below. These types of cracks are usually more of a cosmetic concern than anything else. However, in rare circumstances, the crack(s) may be more serious and you may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Damaged** - The ceiling/wall coverings appear to be damaged in one or more areas. Damage can be the result of impact and/or abrasion. It can range from the relatively minor to the potentially significant. Usually damaged ceiling/wall coverings could be considered a cosmetic item but still many involve significant cost to repair. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.

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- ♦ **Deteriorated** - The ceiling/wall coverings appear to be in a deteriorated condition in one or more areas. This can be relatively minor items like peeling paint to more significant items like plaster which may be breaking, losing its bond and presenting a drop hazard. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Not Plumb** - The wall(s) appears not to be plumb in one or more areas. This condition is commonly the result of poor workmanship and/or settlement/shift. This may call into question its ability to carry the intended load. Failure to correct the problem could, in a worst case scenario, result in settlement or collapse of the load above the wall and/or unnecessary expenses. While it is possible that it may be nothing more than a cosmetic concern, you may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Patched** - The ceiling/wall coverings appear to be patched in one or more areas. A patch may be indicative of a past moisture leak or other damage. The inspector may be unable to comment as to whether the item has been repaired correctly. The quality of a patch may detract cosmetically from the room. The vendor may be able to supply additional information relating to the patch.
- ♦ **Sag** - The ceiling(s) and/or coverings appear to be sagging in one or more locations. A sag can be the result of typical settlement, poor workmanship and/or a moisture penetration. While perhaps cosmetically unappealing, it may not require any action. However, it is important to determine the cause in case corrective action is needed.
- ♦ **Water Marks/Damage** - There appears to be evidence of water marks/damage on the ceiling/wall in one or more locations. The marks/damage may represent a current or past problem. In either case, determination of the source of water marks/damage and the quality of any corrective action should be made in order to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence. Failure to properly correct the source of the problem in a timely manner can lead to expensive and/or unnecessary repairs.

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### 3.1 FLOORS

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Floors conceal the building structure on the lower horizontal surfaces of each level of living space. From an inspection viewpoint, floors may offer clues to structural deficiencies as well as water leakage problems. Commonly used floor coverings include wood, carpet, ceramic tile or resilient flooring. Marble, stone and slate coverings are relatively uncommon and are considered high end products.

- ♦ **Cracked/Torn** - The floor(s) and/or coverings appear to be cracked or torn in one or more areas. Cracks are usually the result of poor workmanship, settlement and/or impact. Tears are usually the result of poor workmanship combined with daily wear or abrasion. Tears may present a trip hazard and should be corrected for safety sake. Cracks are usually more of a cosmetic concern than anything else. However, in rare circumstances, the crack(s) may indicate something more serious and you may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Damaged** - The floor(s) and/or coverings appear to be damaged in one or more areas. Damage can be the result of impact and/or abrasion. It can range from the relatively minor to the potentially significant. Usually, damaged floor(s) coverings would be considered a cosmetic

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item but still may involve significant cost to repair. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.

- ◆ **Deteriorated** - The floor(s) and/or coverings appear to be in a deteriorated condition in one or more areas. This can be a relatively minor item like traffic patterns (regular wear and tear) to more significant items like loose, twisted, and/or warped hardwood flooring. These more significant items may present a trip hazard and should be corrected for safety sake. Usually, deteriorated floor coverings would be considered a cosmetic item but still may involve significant cost to repair. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ◆ **Sag/Slope** - The floor(s) and/or coverings appear to be sagging/sloping in one or more locations. A sag/slope can be the result of typical settlement, poor workmanship and/or a moisture penetration. While perhaps cosmetically unappealing, it may not require any action. However, it is important to determine the cause in case corrective action is needed.
- ◆ **Seams** - The seams of the floor(s) coverings are separating (usually the result of poor workmanship) and may present a trip hazard. The seams on resilient flooring for example can curl up if not properly secured to the subfloor. While correction of this problem usually represents a minimal expense, it is important from a safety perspective.
- ◆ **Squeaks** - The floor(s) seem to be squeaking in one or more locations. Squeaks are a typical result of wood shrinkage as it dries. Excessively squeaking floors could be attributed to poor workmanship. Normally an aesthetic concern, if one wished to eliminate the squeaks, it could become a very costly undertaking.
- ◆ **Trip Hazard** - There appears to be instances of trip hazards in one or more locations. This is to say that where two flooring materials meet they are not at a consistent level which may represent a trip hazard. Correction of the mismatched levels is recommended to avoid possible personal injury.
- ◆ **Water Marks** - There appears to be evidence of water marks/damage on the floor(s) in one or more locations. The marks/damage may represent a current or past problem. Determination of the source of water marks/damage and the quality of any corrective action should be done in order to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence. Failure to properly correct the source of the problem in a timely manner can lead to expensive and/or unnecessary repairs.

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### 4.0 CABINETS/COUNTERS

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Cabinets and counters serve the purpose of providing storage and work surfaces in the home. They are most commonly located in kitchens and bathrooms.

- ◆ **Damaged** - The Cabinets and/or counters appear to be damaged in one or more areas. Damage can be the result of impact and/or abrasion. It can range from the relatively minor to the potentially significant. Usually, damaged cabinets and/or counters would be considered a cosmetic item but still may involve significant cost to repair. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.

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- ♦ **Hardware** - The hardware on the cabinet(s) in one or more locations may be damaged, missing, inoperable or out of adjustment. Correction or replacement of hardware is normally a relatively minor expense and may restore proper/safe operation.
- ♦ **Fit/Operation** - The fit and/or operation of one or more of the cabinet doors and/or drawers may be less than ideal and is commonly the result of use/abuse and/or poor workmanship. Restoring fit and/or operation is usually a relatively simple task.
- ♦ **Loose** - The cabinets and/or counters in one or more areas appears to be loose and may represent a safety hazard. Correction of this condition is usually a relatively simple task.
- ♦ **Mildew** - There appears to be mildew in one or more of the cabinets. This is usually the result of a water leak and/or excess moisture inside the cabinet(s). Correction of the problem in a timely fashion is recommended.
- ♦ **Missing** - Part or all of the cabinet(s)/counter(s) appears to be missing in one or more locations in the home. This item may be a cosmetic item but may still involve significant costs to correct.
- ♦ **Rot** - One or more of the cabinet(s)/counter(s) appears to have rot. Correction of this item may involve significant costs.
- ♦ **Water Damage** - There appears to be evidence of water marks/damage on one or more of the cabinets/counters in the home. The marks/damage may represent a current or past problem. In either case, determination of the source of water damage and the quality of any corrective action should be made in order to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence. Failure to properly correct the source of the problem in a timely manner can lead to expensive and/or unnecessary repairs.

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### 5.0 STAIRS

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Stairs serve as a means of travel from one level to another of the structure. Stairs should be properly designed with reasonable slopes, railings and steps to provide safe passage. The most common material used in stair construction is wood.

- ♦ **Damaged** - The stairs appear to be damaged in one or more areas. Damage can be the result of impact and/or abrasion. It can range from the relatively minor (small splits in wood steps) to the potentially significant (structural instability). Damaged stairs could be considered a safety/liability concern and therefore may warrant corrective action.
- ♦ **Design** - The design of the stairs appears to be substandard or insufficient to provide proper levels of safety. Stairs should be reviewed for performance/safety improvements.
- ♦ **Deteriorated** - The stairs(s) appear to be in a deteriorated condition in one or more areas. This can be a relatively minor item like traffic patterns (regular wear and tear) to more significant items like loose steps, stringers and/or supports. These more significant items may represent a hazard and should be corrected for safety sake. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.

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- ♦ **Headroom** - The design of the stairs may have resulted in insufficient headroom. Headroom may be an issue on a stairway if a person were to hit their head and injure themselves. Correction of a headroom issue is usually not a simple straightforward task and may involve significant cost. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Railing Loose/Missing** - There appears to be a railing which is either loose or missing. A properly designed and installed railing is important as a safety item to help reduce the risk of injury to persons using the stairs. Failure to correct a railing deficiency could result in personal harm and significant liability concerns. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Steps Uneven** - The spacing of the steps in the stairs appear to be uneven in one or more locations. Uneven spacing can present a safety hazard for those persons using the stairs. This is usually the result of poor or compromised design. Correction of uneven steps is often not a simple straight forward process and can be quite costly. Installation of extra safety measures (i.e. extra railings) may minimize the risk involved to those persons using the stairs. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Steep** - The stairs appear to be quite steep in one or more locations and may present a safety hazard. This is usually the result of poor or compromised design. Correction of a very steep set of stairs is often not a simple straight forward process and can be quite costly. Installation of extra safety measures (i.e. extra railings) may minimize the risk involved to those persons using the stairs. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Through Basement Floor** - The stairs appear to go through the basement floor. The concrete basement floor may have been poured after the stairs were installed. This may leave the bottom of the stair structure in contact with soil below the floor. Wood/soil contact usually results in deterioration of the wood and, in some areas, may serve as a termite invitation/access into the home. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.

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### 6.0 FIREPLACE(S)

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Fireplaces and wood stoves can add both warmth and ambience to a living space. For safety sake, they should be properly designed, installed and maintained. Masonry and metal are the two most common construction materials used in fireplaces and the most common fuels are wood and gas.

- ♦ **Clearance** - The clearances between fireplaces or wood stoves and combustible materials may be insufficient, presenting a fire hazard. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Damaged** - The fireplace(s) appears to be damaged in one or more areas. Damage can be the result of impact and/or abrasion. It can range from the relatively minor to the potentially significant (structural instability). Damaged fireplace(s) could be considered a safety/liability concern and may warrant corrective action before using the fireplace.
- ♦ **Damper Stuck/Missing** - The damper appears to be stuck or missing in one or more fireplaces. The lack of a damper may allow for significant heat loss up the flue if the damper

is not there to close it off when the fireplace is not in use. A stuck damper may be relatively insignificant and need only minor adjustment. However, if the damper is missing,

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replacement of it may involve a number of trips to different fireplace suppliers since they come in a wide variety of sizes and styles. The efforts to correct this concern are generally rewarded quite quickly in reduced heating costs and improved comfort.

- ♦ **Deteriorated** - The fireplace(s)/wood stove(s) appears to be in a deteriorated condition in one or more areas. This can be a relatively minor item (in need of maintenance) to more significant items like gaps in the fire box. The more significant items may represent a hazard and should be corrected for safety sake. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Dirty** - The fireplace appears to be dirty and/or glazed. This will restrict the inspector from being able to comment thoroughly on its condition. It is recommended that fireplaces and chimneys be thoroughly cleaned and evaluated by the appropriate specialists prior to their use as a safety precaution.
- ♦ **Inoperative** - The gas fireplace appears to be inoperative. This may be the result of the fuel being turned off and/or the pilot light being turned off on the unit. Operation of the unit can not be confirmed today, you may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Mortar** - The mortar in the fireplace(s) appears to be in poor condition and may present a fire hazard. Correction of the problem can range from the relatively minor (i.e. isolated tuck pointing) to the more significant (i.e. partial or total rebuilding of the fireplace). You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.

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### 7.0 WINDOWS (Also see "Exterior" section)

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Windows can provide light and ventilation to the home while still offering the ability to support the weather tight envelope around the home. Windows are made primarily of wood, metal or vinyl and can last the lifetime of the home. They are available in a wide variety of configurations and price ranges.

- ♦ **Condensation** - There may be condensation evidence in between the window panes of thermal window(s) or on the inside of single glazed window(s) in one or more locations. Condensation in a thermal window is the result of a loss of the vacuum seal between the glass panels. It is considered more a cosmetic than a performance issue since the resulting fog or staining only impairs the view through the window. Depending on the degree of the condensation effects, you may want to consider its replacement. Condensation on the living space side of windows would normally be caused by a high moisture level in the home and may result in damage to the window frame and/or the wall below. Improved ventilation in the home and/or reduced humidifier settings will normally reduce the condensation on the interior side of the windows.
- ♦ **Cracked** - The window pane(s) appear to be cracked and could be a possible source of moisture penetration into the home. Failure to correct the condition can result in moisture penetration and heat loss, either of which can result in unnecessary expenses.
- ♦ **Damaged** - Damage to the window can be the result of poor workmanship, abrasion or impact. This could have been caused by people or pets. Damage can range from the relatively minor to

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the potentially significant. This damage may be to the framing of the window and may impair its operability or performance.

- ♦ **Hardware** - The hardware on the window(s) in one or more locations may be damaged, missing, inoperable or out of adjustment. Correction or replacement of hardware is normally a relatively minor expense and may restore comfort and safety levels in the home.
- ♦ **Leak** - There is leak evidence at one or more of the windows in the home. Leaks can result in damage ranging from the relatively minor (peeling paint, etc.) to the potentially significant (structural instability). Correction of the problem can be as simple as applying caulking at the exterior of the window to as complex as replacing structural members. You may wish to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Screens** - There appears to be window screens missing or damaged on one or more of the windows. Screens conveniently help to keep bugs/insects from entering the home, but more importantly can be a safety issue for occupants (people and pets).
- ♦ **Sticking** - One or more of the windows appears to be stuck or sticking. A stuck or sticking window can be the result of sloppy painting, poor maintenance, or swelling due to humidity. Correction of a stuck or sticking window is usually relatively minor and may require only a little effort.

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### 8.0 DOORS

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Doors in the interior of a home serve to offer privacy to selected areas or rooms. They can also offer sound dampening qualities to improve the overall enjoyment of the home. Doors come in a variety of configurations which serve many different purposes. They are most commonly constructed of wood.

- ♦ **Damaged** - Damage to the door(s) can be the result of poor workmanship, abrasion or impact. Damage can range from the relatively minor to the potentially significant. This damage may be to the framing or the door itself and may impair its operability or performance.
- ♦ **Double Key Entry** - There appears to be a double key entry at one or more of the homes exterior doors. This means that a key is required from the interior to lock or unlock the door. The likely reason for a double key entry door is to either prevent an intruder from simply breaking the door window and reaching in to unlock the door. The problem arises in a fire, or other emergency situation, when it is imperative to open this door quickly to get safely out of the house. For this reason, reconsideration of a double key entry in the home is recommended.
- ♦ **Fit/Operation** - The fit and/or operation of one or more of the interior doors may be less than ideal and is commonly the result of settlement and/or poor workmanship. Restoring fit and/or operation is usually a relatively simple task.
- ♦ **Hardware** - The hardware on the door(s) in one or more locations may be damaged, missing, inoperable or out of adjustment. Correction or replacement of hardware is normally a relatively minor expense.

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### 9.0 EXHAUST FANS

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Exhaust Fans help to actively ventilate moisture from the home. Effective ventilation within the home is important because excess moisture can have expensive consequences to the home's finishes and structure. The two most common locations to find exhaust fans are in the kitchen and bathrooms.

- ◆ **Flow** - One or more of the exhaust fans in the home appears not to be offering enough flow. While the exhaust fan may be working, it appears to be either undersized for the room or is moving air at a slower rate than would likely be needed to properly vent the room. You may wish to consider replacing the existing fan with one better suited to the space.
- ◆ **Inoperative** - One or more of the exhaust fans in the home appears to be inoperative. This may indicate a defective or unplugged fan. Replacement of a defective fan is normally an inexpensive consideration. Exhaust fans serve to vent humid air from the home and help reduce the possibility of humidity damage to interior surfaces.
- ◆ **Missing** - An exhaust fan is missing in one or more locations of the home where it could be useful. Exhaust fans serve to vent humid air from the home and help reduce the possibility of humidity damage to interior surfaces. An inspector may report on a missing exhaust fan when he/she believes the installation of one would be beneficial in correcting or preventing a humidity problem.
- ◆ **Noisy** - One or more of the exhaust fans in the home are considered to be unusually noisy. This may be easily corrected by a good cleaning and/or lubrication. Sometimes they will require replacement and you may consider upgrading to a quieter (usually more expensive) model.
- ◆ **Obstructed** - One or more of the exhaust fans in the home is obstructed. This may be the result of poor maintenance (i.e. buildup of lint or debris) or even a bird's nest in the duct work. Elimination of the obstruction is usually achieved with a thorough cleaning, either at the fan or at the vent end of the duct work.
- ◆ **Venting** - One or more of the exhaust fans which should vent to the exterior may not. Exhaust fans serve to vent humid air from the home and help reduce the possibility of humidity damage to interior surfaces. When exhaust fans do not vent to the exterior of a structure, they may simply be transferring a problem from one location to another within that structure. Correction of the problem may reduce the risk of unnecessary damage and related expenses.

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### 10.0 OTHER

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Other is where your inspector may have noted the presence of items that he/she felt you should be made aware of. These items may include carbon monoxide detectors, central vac etc. which are typically not within the scope of an inspection. This section may also be used by your inspector to bring other items to your attention that affect the interior of the home.

- ◆ **Central Vac** – this term is available for your inspector to use in conjunction with other terms in 10.0.
- ◆ **CO Detector(s)** - this term is available for your inspector to use in conjunction with other terms in 10.0.

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- ♦ **Damaged** - One or more of the miscellaneous items appears to be damaged. If the item(s) are safety related (i.e. CO Detectors) it/they should definitely be replaced. These items are relatively inexpensive and can provide life saving protection.
- ♦ **Efflorescence** - There appears to be efflorescence in one or more locations in the home. Efflorescence is the mineral salt left behind after water has migrated through a masonry type wall and evaporated. Unless the efflorescence is wet on the day of the inspection, the inspector may be unable to conclusively prove it indicates a current moisture penetration concern. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Inoperative** - One or more of the miscellaneous items appears to be inoperative. If the item(s) are safety related (i.e. CO Detectors) it/they should definitely be replaced or repaired. This may be the result of an interrupted power supply or a dead battery. These items are relatively inexpensive and can provide life saving protection. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Leak Evidence** - There is leak evidence in one or more locations in the home. This may be the result of a current moisture penetration concern. It can range from the relatively minor (caulking/seals on windows or at protrusions) to the more significant (cracks in the foundation). Pinpointing the exact cause or entry point of the moisture penetration problem is not always a simple task. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Location** - One or more of the miscellaneous items appears to be missing or located in a poor location within the home. Correction may involve the installation or relocation of one or more of the devices. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Mildew/Mustiness** - There appears to be mildew/mustiness in one or more locations in the home. This is usually the result of excess moisture (not necessarily from the outside) combined with poor ventilation in the area. When moisture is trapped in materials (i.e. carpet, furniture, storage) it can emit a musty smell as a tell-tale sign. Musty material may need to be cleaned/shampooed and, even then, the odour may be only reduced, not eliminated. Correction of the problem may be assisted by the use of a dehumidifier as well as improving ventilation in the area. If a humidifier is used in the house, you may wish to consider adjusting the dial to reduce its output. If it is determined to be a result of outside moisture penetration, please refer to 12.0 in this section for more information. In some situations, further analysis by a specialist may be recommended. Mold is beyond the scope of the home inspection. Your inspector is *not* a mold expert. If this item has noted it was done so as a courtesy because of some evidence that was patently obvious to your inspector. If mold is suspected having an IAQ (Indoor Air Quality) assessment done by a company specializing in these tests may be appropriate.
- ♦ **Peeling/Bubbling Paint** - There appears to be peeling and/or bubbling paint in one or more areas of the home. This is commonly the result of excessive moisture which causes the paint to lose its bond to the wall. Simply repainting the wall surface will not prevent a recurrence. It is important to determine the source of the moisture. Correction of the problem can range  
  
from the relatively minor to the potentially significant. Please refer to 12.0 in this section for more information.
- ♦ **Raised Floor** - There appears to be a raised floor in one or more areas within the home. Raised floors are usually put in to provide a level floor surface since basement floors tend to

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slope towards a drainage point. The concern with a raised floor is that it limits the inspector from seeing signs of moisture below it. The inspector may be unable to comment on the condition of the raised floor structure and/or any moisture indications below it.

- ♦ **Water** - There appears to be water present in one or more locations of the home. This is an indication of a current problem and the situation should be remedied as soon as possible to prevent further damage and/or unnecessary expenses. Pinpointing the exact cause or entry point of the moisture problem is not always a simple task. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action. Please refer to section 12.0 in this section for more information.
- ♦ **Window Bars** - There appears to be window bars installed, presumably for security purposes. It should be noted that this type of security measure which is intended to keep intruders out can also keep people in (i.e. windows may be needed in a fire emergency). It may not be within the scope of the inspection to comment on the presence of window bars.

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### 12.0 BASEMENT MOISTURE

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The term "BASEMENT" commonly describes the level of a home that is at least partly below grade. A basement, by definition of being below grade, is always vulnerable to moisture penetration. The vast majority of basements do leak at one time or another. **It is virtually impossible to accurately predict whether a basement will leak in the future.**

An inspector relies on clues present on the day of the inspection for signs of past and/or present problems. It is entirely possible that a basement may show no signs of moisture penetration concerns on the day of the inspection, yet still leak a month later. The signs uncovered during an inspection will rarely confirm how often or severe a basement leak may be or have been. The more common clues that may indicate a penetration concern are outlined earlier in section 10.0 "Other".

Electronic moisture readings may offer some indication of the general dampness in the basement on the day of the inspection. If your inspector has taken electronic moisture readings, he/she may have noted them near the middle of the "Interior" report page along with what they may suggest. Below are expanded explanations for each of the check boxes in the "Basement Moisture Indicators" section of the "Interior" report page.

- ♦ **Suggests Relatively Dry - Today** - The basement moisture indicators are on the comfortable and/or low side, suggesting a relatively dry basement on the day of the inspection. This does not guarantee that the basement will not leak in the future, only that the moisture levels are low today.
- ♦ **Monitor Closely** - You should be aware that even if the basement has had no problems in the past, there are no guarantees that it will be problem free in the future. It would be prudent to monitor the basement frequently. A wet spell can increase pressure on basement dampness. Extra attention may be warranted to aid in the early detection of any potential problems.
- ♦ **Suggests Moderate Moisture Penetration** - The basement moisture indicators are above the low and into the mid range, suggesting moderate moisture penetration on the day of the inspection. This does not suggest that there is water in the basement, only that it is not as dry as it could be. This is the result of some excess moisture (not necessarily from the outside) and may be combined with poor ventilation in the area. Correction of the problem may be assisted by the use of a dehumidifier as well as improving ventilation in the area. If a humidifier is used in the house, you may wish to consider adjusting the dial to reduce its output. This does

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not guarantee that the basement will be problem free in the future. Pinpointing the exact cause or entry point of the moisture penetration problem is not always a simple task. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.

- ♦ **Suggests Isolated Moisture Penetration** - The basement moisture indicators appear to rise noticeably in certain areas suggesting there may be isolated moisture penetration points found on the day of the inspection. The area(s) where the readings appear higher should be considered especially vulnerable to moisture penetration and you should be aware there may already be some repairs needed in the area(s). This does not suggest that any part of the basement is guaranteed to be problem free in the future. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Suggests Wet Basement** - The basement moisture indicators are into the mid and possibly high range, suggesting there may be wet basement concerns on the day of the inspection. These readings can suggest moisture penetration through the foundation walls. Pinpointing the exact cause or entry point of the moisture penetration problem is not always a simple task. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Confirms Wet Basement** - The basement moisture indicators are into the high range and confirm there is a wet basement concern on the day of the inspection. These readings usually suggest moisture penetration through the foundation walls. Pinpointing the exact cause or entry point of the moisture penetration problem is not always a simple task. You may want to consider further investigation before deciding on a course of action.
- ♦ **Improve Exterior Grading/Downspout Extensions** - Exterior grading is an important aspect of the water management around the home. Properly done, it can have an enormous positive impact on basement dampness concerns. When reviewing lot grading, emphasis should be placed on a six foot perimeter, ensuring the grading slopes away from the home. For effective water management, the house should kind of look like it is on a pitcher's mound. It is important to understand that the grading on the rest of the lot can also affect basement dampness pressures. For example, if the house is placed at the lower end of a steeply sloped lot, you may need to consider more aggressive grading in the vicinity of the home. Another consideration of exterior water management is downspouts that may discharge above grade too close to the house. Ideally, they should discharge at least six feet or more from the home. This will redirect significant quantities of water away from the house. Since water tends to percolate down into soil in a pyramid like shape, this should help ensure that very little water is allowed to put pressure on the foundation walls. Exterior grading and downspout extensions are relatively minor corrections that offer a major payoff. Implementing both types of corrections can reduce or eliminate the vast majority of basement dampness problems. It is quite simple. Corrections like those just described will help direct most of the water away from the foundation wall. If there is little or no water next to the foundation wall, then there is little chance of moisture penetration. While implementing these corrections will go a long way to solving the problem, this does not absolutely guarantee the basement to be problem free in the

future. Digging up the yard should not be required except in extreme or unusual circumstances.

**An inspector cannot accurately predict future basement/crawlspace moisture penetration:** This note is to inform you of the reality of home inspections. While an inspector may give you suggestions based on statistical averages, it is not realistic to expect the inspector to accurately predict the future performance (or lack thereof) of this home's basement/crawlspace.

