

THE SCARIEST THINGS

A HOME INSPECTOR CAN FIND

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A home inspector can encounter a lot of horrors in a day's work. The job entails conducting a visual, non-invasive examination of the condition of a home, inspecting all the accessible major components.

These are a home inspector's worst nightmares, courtesy of Dale Trach of NewLook Inspections.

MAJOR DEFECTS IN NEW CONSTRUCTION

There should not be water in a crawlspace or basement in a newly constructed home. Potentially, this leakage can reoccur in the future if not repaired correctly. As the water evaporates, it creates ongoing high humidity that can support mould growth in attics and roof spaces.

RAW SEWAGE

It's a good thing that modern plumbing normally keeps raw sewage in its place.

A malfunction, leak or overflow can result in odour, moisture, sanitation and health issues—particularly if the problem continues. In one particularly nasty example, sewage entered a crawlspace through a missing clean-out cap every time the toilet flushed.



ABANDONED BURIED OIL TANKS

When older houses converted from oil to natural gas furnaces, many home owners simply left the buried oil tank in the ground. Some didn't pump the oil out of the tank.

These metal tanks eventually corrode and the oil leaks out, contaminating the surrounding soil. Cleanup includes removing the tank, removing all contaminated soil—including on neighbouring properties—and replacing it with clean fill. The costs can be enormous.

LEAKY CONDO SYNDROME

This has cost many people a frightening amount of money. It's caused by many factors: buildings designed without roof overhangs and with exposed decks over living spaces; tighter building envelopes in the name of energy efficiency, and poorly standardized construction details with poor workmanship. Rainscreen technology is now mandatory on newly constructed and remediated buildings.

MOULD

Mould can grow anywhere warm air meets



a cooler surface and condenses. Besides moist rooms like the kitchen, bathroom and basement, uninsulated walls and ceilings and single-paned windows and doors are often mould sites. Children and the elderly are most susceptible to continual exposure and possible long-term health effects.

MARIJUANA GROW-OPS

The physical damage from a grow-op can be substantial and, if not correctly remediated, can have health, structural and moisture-related issues. Obtaining a mortgage or home insurance can be difficult and may include additional costs. You might not know that a home is a former grow-op, unless it's been busted by the police. Owners sometimes try to cover up the home's history. However, a home inspector can recognize most of the clues.

SUBSTANDARD DIY UPGRADES

Home inspectors see DIY additions, basement suites and general renovations. Often, these involve unprofessional—and sometimes dangerous—modifications to

roofing, structural, electrical, plumbing and heating systems. In one example, a home owner created more storage in an attic by cutting engineered roof trusses, without adding any reinforcement. Likely, that roof will sag, and possibly collapse. In extreme cases, bad DIY upgrades need to be partially or totally removed and redone.

ANIMALS

Signs of rodents and other animals show up in attics and crawlspaces. The animals have probably done some damage in order to get in, and will do even more as they live and die in the space. They're hard to get rid of, and the home will need significant repairs and clean-up after they move out.

