

# ASHI Survey: Ten Most Frequent House Problems

In the most recent survey of its members, the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) compiled the following list of the most frequently found problems in the homes they inspected:

1. Improper surface grading/drainage. This was by far the most frequently found problem. It is responsible for the most common of household maladies—water penetration of the basement or crawlspace.

2. Improper electrical wiring. A significant number chose this item as the most common home defect, which includes such situations as insufficient electrical service to the house, inadequate overload protection and amateur, often dangerous, wiring connection.

3. Roof damage. Roof leakage, caused by old or damaged shingles or improper flashing, is an often seen problem.

4. Heating Systems. Problems in this category include broken or malfunctioning operation controls, blocked chimneys and unsafe exhaust disposal.

5. Poor overall maintenance. Even the novice homebuyer is usually aware of this situation, demonstrated by such signs as cracked, peeling or dirty painted surfaces, crumbling masonry, makeshift wiring or plumbing, and broken fixtures or appliances.

6. Structurally related problems. Many houses, as a result of problems in one or more of the other categories, sustain damage to such structural components as foundation walls, floor joists, rafters and window and door headers.

7. Plumbing. Plumbing defects still rank high among the house problems encountered, and include the existence of old or

incompatible piping materials, as well as faulty fixtures and waste lines.

8. Exteriors. Flaws in a home's exterior, including windows, door and wall surfaces are responsible for the discomfort of water and air penetration, but rarely have structural significance. Inadequate caulking and/or weatherstripping are the most common culprits.

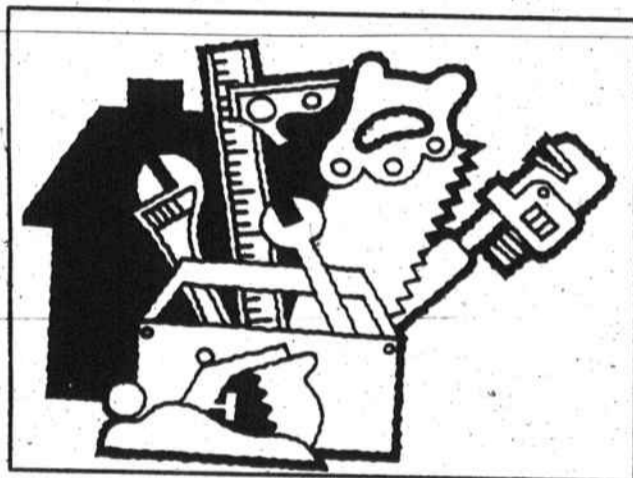
9. Poor ventilation. Perhaps due to overly ambitious efforts to save energy, many home owners have "over-sealed" their homes, resulting in excessive interior moisture. This can cause rotting and premature failure of both structural and non-structural elements.

10. Miscellaneous. This category includes primarily interior components, often cosmetic in nature, which were not found frequently enough to rank individually in the survey.

It is significant that within this list of ten problem categories, at least four are directly related to the damaging effects of water. It is apparent, therefore, that after a home is built, (presumably in a structurally sound manner), keeping water out is the homeowner's most important—and continually challenging—objective.

In addition, the age of a home plays a significant role in the survey findings. In older, urban houses, problems such as heating system failure, inadequate electrical service and worn plumbing can be found with much greater frequency than reflected in this nationwide survey.

— The American Society of Home Inspectors



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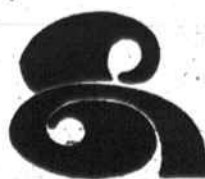
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