

# Ask the Inspector.Info



*Certified Home Inspections of Northern Indi-*

## BEWARE of "SEALING THE SUMP" MYTH

- **MYTH:** Sealing the sump basin and cracks in a basement will reduce radon levels in the home.
- **FACT:** The EPA does not recommend the use of sealing alone to limit radon entry. Sealing alone has not been shown to lower radon levels significantly or consistently. **Radon mitigation contractors seal sump basins (ones containing a perimeter drain) and cracks to create a vacuum under the slab of the home in order for their radon reduction system to work properly.** Do not accept contractor offers to do this kind of work to "help" avoid putting in a radon mitigation system. Once again, it HAS NOT been proven to be affective and could be a waste of time and money.

It's the test result that sellers seem to dread the most, the radon test. Here in St. Joseph County, we have seen higher positive radon results, nearly double, than the national average which is that 1 in 15 homes will have a high level of radon. The EPA and the Surgeon General recommend all homes be tested for radon. Sellers should not dread a high test result. Most homes can be fixed for about the same cost as other common home repairs, like painting or having a new water heater installed. Buyers can be put to ease knowing that once the home is mitigated these systems generally can reduce radon levels to around 2.0 pCi/L or lower. This is lower than the average for our county (4.0

pCi/L) according to the EPA. Here are some guidelines to help you during your real estate transaction...

- Encourage sellers to test for radon before listing their home so they have more time to address a high test result
- Encourage buyers to have a radon test performed
- Choose a state licensed radon tester who will follow EPA protocol and test for a minimum of 48 hours under closed-house conditions and include test interference control
- If the test result is over 4.0 pCi/L, the EPA recommends mitigating the home



Continuous Radon Monitors are used for fast, accurate results in residential radon testing.

- If you choose to do two short term tests, the EPA recommends fixing the home if the average of the two tests are 4 pCi/L or more
- Choose a state licensed radon mitigation company that will follow EPA protocol which always requires a guarantee and an independent post mitigation radon test.

\*Source—EPA's Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon Publication

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## SB City Recommends Disconnecting Downspouts—Good or Bad?

South Bend city residents have been urged to have city crews disconnect and cap-off underground downspouts free of charge. We agree this would help reduce sewer overflow during heavy rain and snow. However, we believe disconnecting downspouts shifts the risk of flooding back on the homeowner. You must take into consideration the neighborhoods in which this is happening. Redirecting downspout

water into yards where houses are relatively close together (i.e., such as in older city neighborhoods) can cause too much saturation in the ground and force water into basements. We have seen an influx of basement water problems in older city neighborhoods over the past decade where these 100 year old homes had never seen water trouble before. The smaller the lot, the greater risk of flooding will be to the home-

owner because there isn't enough space to properly disperse the overflow of drainage. While this obviously is not the case in every city neighborhood, we do believe that homeowners and the city should work together to seek further solutions for property owners with smaller lots.

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*Certified Home Inspections is a locally owned, multi-inspector firm serving the Michiana area. Our home inspectors are licensed in the state of Indiana and regularly attend continuing education courses. We do this as part of our commitment to provide the most thorough home inspection possible. Our full-time office staff is there to support our clients and realtors with administrative needs such as scheduling and issuing reports. It is our pleasure to help make your home buying and selling experience go as smooth as possible. We look forward to*

## Collecting Fees At The Time Of Inspection

You may have already heard that many area home inspectors are collecting fees at the time of inspection. You may be interested to know that escrowing inspection fees at closing is unheard of in other parts of the country. We understand that while it has been a convenience for our clients not having to pay for inspection fees out-of-pocket, we must now require those fees be paid for at the time of inspection due to

changes in the local real estate purchase contract. As of January 1, 2007, the purchase contract states that inspection fees will not be paid for through earnest money if the real estate sale falls through. For convenience we will accept checks and credit cards as methods of payment. Good old fashion cash won't be turned away either. If choosing a credit card, the client will be able to enter in their own credit card information

online when receiving their home inspection report. Our credit card service is hosted by a secure website for peace of mind. Paid receipts are automatically turned into the appropriate title company so there's no confusion as to whether or not the inspection has been paid for. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us transition into this new policy and look forward to continuing to serve you and your clients.

**Cash, Check,  
Or Credit  
Card**

**Customers  
can pay for  
their  
inspection**

## Web-Based Reports....It's Good For Business!

You may or may not be a fan of technology, but you'd have to admit that it is pretty cool to have a wealth of information at your fingertips. That would include our whole house inspection reports. The decision to go web-based has been a success over the past year and a half. We find that realtors love getting the report online and being able to access it from anywhere

such as home or the office....while on vacation or if you're really into technology, those really cool gadgets you carry around in your palm that let's you be online anywhere! We automatically send the report to the buyer as well so you have the opportunity to discuss the report with them without actually meeting face to face if you choose. This often saves

time. Please note that our website is password protected. Therefore your inspection reports are not viewed by anyone other than you and your client unless you forward it yourself. And as always, if you have a need for a paper copy, we would be happy to get you a printed copy upon request.





