

# Your HOME

## IS YOUR HOME IN TIP-TOP SHAPE?

According to the American Society of Home Inspectors, the most frequent problems found during home inspections include:

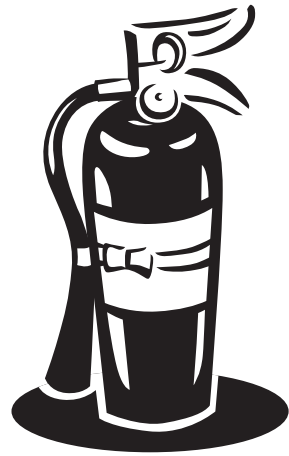
- Improper Surface Grading/ Drainage.** This is the most frequently found problem and is responsible for water penetration of basements and crawlspaces.
- Roof Damage.** Though shingle repairs are easy and inexpensive, roof leakage caused by old or damaged shingles is a common problem. You may need to reroof if the shingles are very old.
- Heating Systems.** Problems include broken or malfunctioning operation controls, unsafe exhaust disposal, and blocked chimneys—all of which are safety hazards. Keep in mind that heating systems should be serviced by qualified professionals, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Improper Electrical Wiring.** Inspectors often find insufficient electrical service to the home, inadequate overload protection, and amateur and often dangerous wire connections.
- Poor Overall Maintenance.** Problems range from rotted or decayed exterior lumber to cracked, peeling, or dirty painted surfaces. Inspectors find crumbling masonry, shoddy plumbing, and broken fixtures and appliances.

If you're thinking about selling your home, make sure all these systems are in good shape!

## PLAN A WAY OUT

Fire drills aren't just for schools or office buildings. They are even more important in the home. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), most fatal fires occur in the home. Make sure every member of your family knows how to get out in case of a fire. Here's what NFPA recommends:

- Draw a floor plan of your home. Note all windows and doors.
- Plan two exits from each room. Make sure windows open easily. Doors and windows with security bars should be equipped with quick-releasing devices that everyone can operate.
- Agree on an outside meeting place and mark it on your escape plan.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and in or near every sleeping area. Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Practice your escape plan at least twice a year.
- And finally, once out, stay out! Never go back inside a burning building.



## WHAT'S THE VALUE OF YOUR HOME?

A variety of factors can affect the value of a home. What makes your property special to you? Do you have a great view from the living room? A spacious garage? A pretty lot? These features can increase the value of your home.

Having difficulty estimating your home's worth? I can help! Give me a call, and we can start determining the value of your property.

## MOVING OUT OF STATE?

Are you anticipating an out-of-state move? I can help you sell your current home--and find a new one in your destination state! The Residential Sales Council and Real Estate Brokerage Managers Council, affiliates of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, provide a nationwide network of highly professional REALTORS®. Like me, my colleagues have taken special educational courses designed to give them all the knowledge they need to assist you in buying or selling a home. Tell me where you are going, and I can refer you to the best in the business there!

## Questions I Am Often Asked...

**Q.** What is escrow?

**A.** Escrow is a process where a certain agreement or something of value is put in the care of a neutral third party until certain conditions are fulfilled. In closing a real estate transaction, the third party must do the following:

- receive a complete, fully executed purchase and sales agreement and/or lender's instructions;
- order and deliver a commitment for title insurance to all parties involved in the transaction;
- order the necessary payoff statements and demands to clear the title;
- prepare the estimated and final closing statements and the necessary documents to transfer the title;
- obtain all necessary signatures, funds, and documents to close the transaction;
- record and deliver all necessary documents; and
- disburse funds according to the parties' and/or lender's instructions.

*A REALTOR® and his or her firm has all the contacts needed to properly manage escrow and the real estate transaction--from beginning to end.*



GOOD CONSUMER  
NEWS



## Lowest Mortgage Rates in 30 Years!

**T**he Federal Reserve cut interest rates at the end of September in response to global economic unrest. What that means for you is the cost of obtaining a home mortgage is likely to dip even lower, under 6.5%.

Before the cut, 30-year fixed-rate mortgages were averaging 6.64%, with fees and points averaging 1.0, according to Freddie Mac. That's the lowest rate in 30 years and almost a full percentage point lower than this time last year.

More than ever before, now is the time to buy your dream home. It's simply more affordable than ever!

**Do you know someone who is thinking about buying or selling a home?  
Please mention my name.**