

## Visual Property Inspection

251 Woodfield Rd  
Toronto, ON M4L 2W8

Prepared for :

The Weir Team  
Toronto, ON

Phone No. : (416) 465-4545



Inspected by :

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# Report Commentary

Date: 06-Jun-2016

251 Woodfield Rd, Toronto, ON M4L 2W8

This summary is not the entire report. The complete report may include additional information of concern to the client. It is recommended that the client read the entire report.

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## 1.0 Property and Site

### 1.1 **Front Porch Rail**

Replace rotted handrail and steps to promote safe travel.

### 1.2 **Deck(s)/Patio(s)**

The deck is in an advanced state of deterioration and should be repaired/replaced to promote stability.

Add handrail for safety

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## 2.0 Exterior

### 2.1 **Foundation Wall**

Repair mortar and brick deterioration to prevent water entry and related damages.

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## 3.0 Roof Structure

### 3.1 **Main Roof**

Seller advises roof was re-shingled in 2014. Roof is in good condition . Architectural shingles typically last 25 to 30 years

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## 4.0 Basement/Structure

### 4.1 **Railing**

Install continuous handrail to promote safety

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## 5.0 Electrical Service

### 5.1 **Service Size**

100 amp service, copper wire.

### 5.2 **Circuit Wires/Receptacles**

Consult an electrician to repair the following partial list of defects:

-hot/neutral reversed at receptacle

-spliced and exposed connections should be terminated inside a junction box

-upgrade receptacles to include a ground connection

-install gfcı receptacles near kitchen sink



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## 6.0 Heating

### 6.1 Heating System

Mid efficiency furnace is 19 years old. Typical life expectancy is 20 years. Functioning at time of inspection. Seller has furnace and AC maintained twice a year.

### 6.2 AC

AC unit is 16 years old and past its typical life expectancy of 15 years. Functioning as intended at time of inspection.

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## 7.0 Plumbing Components

### 7.1 Hot Water Tank

Rental hot water tank is 19 years old and past its typical life expectancy of 15 years. Functioning at time of inspection.

---

## 8.0 Laundry

### 8.1 Trap/Drain

Replace corroded and disconnected pipe to regain function of tub.

---

## 9.0 Interior Living Spaces

### 9.1 Railing

Install continuous handrail to promote safety .

Install railing to promote safety



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Property and Site

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**Limitations**

- Vegetation/Tree/Shrub       Vines       Debris/Obstruction  
 Snow/Ice Cover  
AGE OF HOME 75+

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**Conditions**

- Sunny/Mostly Sunny       Cloudy/Mostly Cloudy       Rain/Wet Conditions  
 Snow/Ice Conditions  
Approx. Temperature 21 celsius

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**Building**

- 2 Story       Duplex       Condo       Townhome

Recommend CO detector installation as required by law within 15 feet of all bedrooms for occupant safety.

All smoke detectors over 10 years old should be replaced for safety as a precautionary measure. Some have a limited lifespan and older technology detectors are not as effective as newer ones.

Inspection limited by furnishings throughout the home including but not limited to furniture, blinds, curtains, wall & floor coverings, possibly fresh paint, boxes, appliances, clothes, items stored under some or all sinks, and storage items

This is not a building code inspection. Local codes, city and county, can vary significantly and change regularly over time, and are not a part of this home inspection.

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**Landscaping**

- Bushes/Hedge/Flower Bed       Vine       Slopes To House

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**Driveway**

- Concrete       Gravel       Gravel Needs Regrading       Asphalt

Fill drive/walkway ruts/depressions to provide even surface to reduce potential trip hazards.

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**Walkway/Path**

- Slopes to House       Concrete       Paving Stone       Patio Stone/Brick

Fill and seal cracks to reduce water penetration further separation and potential trip hazards

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**Front Porch**

- Crack       Wood/Composite       Concrete       Brick/Block/Paving Stone

Repoint porch columns to prevent further deterioration and promote stability

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**Front Porch Rail**

- Wood       Metal       Composite

Replace rotted handrail and steps to promote safe travel.

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Property and Site

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**Front Porch Light**

**Operational**

- Unsecured     Appears to be sensor activated     Representative # Inspected/Tested

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**Deck(s)/Patio(s)**

- Slopes to House     Wood/Composite     Paving Stone/Block/Brick  
 Typical Cracking     Concrete

*The deck is in an advanced state of deterioration and should be repaired/replaced to promote stability.*

*Add handrail for safety*

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**Deck Railing**

- Wood     Metal     Composite

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**Retaining Wall**

- Wood     Metal     Concrete     Leaning slightly - Typical

Monitor retaining wall movement and correct as required to reduce potential safety hazards

Exterior

**Limitations**

- Insulation Conceals       Clearance       Debris/Obstruction  
 Obstructed/No or Partial Access       Bushes/Vines/Tree Obstructions       Snow/Ice Cover

**Foundation Wall**

- Stone/Flagstone       Brick       Concrete       Block  
 Preserved Wood       Partially Concealed       Hairline Cracking-typical  
 Completely Concealed

*Repair mortar and brick deterioration to prevent water entry and related damages.*

**Exterior Walls**

- Wood/Composite       Stucco       Vinyl/Aluminum       Brick/Stone  
 On Wood Framing

Fill and seal holes to prevent pest entry and related damages

**Window Exterior**

- Wood       Metal       Vinyl       Wood Int/Vinyl or Metal Cla

**Garage Side or Back Door**

**Operational**

- Dented/Minor Damage       Binds - Adjust/repair

Replace deteriorated caulking around door

**Exterior Lighting**

**Operational**

- Not all lights tested       Unsecured - repair       Representative # Inspected/Tested



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Garage

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**Type**

- Detached     Attached     Built-In     1 Car     2 Car     3 Car  
 4 Car

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**Door**

- Automatic     Manual     1 Automatic & 1 Manu

**Operational**

- Wood     Metal

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**Floor**

- Cracking - Typical - Seal     Movement/Heaving     Concrete     Asphalt/Gravel  
 Partially Concealed

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**Wall**

- Drywall/Plaster     Wood     Stone/Brick     Partially Concealed

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**Ceiling**

- Crack     Drywall/Plaster     Wood

## Roof Structure

### Inspected By:

- Binocular     Roof Edge     Walk On     No Access

### Limitations

- Deck/Patio     Solar Panels     Gravel Cover     Steep Slope     Height  
 Snow/Ice Cover     Rain - Too Slippery     Material Too Slippery

### Main Roof

- Flat     Gable     Hip/Valley     Shed  
Estimated Age 1.5    Pitch 3 in 12

*Seller advises roof was re-shingled in 2014. Roof is in good condition . Architectural shingles typically last 25 to 30 years*

### Gutter/Downspout

- Galvanized     Plastic     Aluminum     Copper

### Fascia/Soffit

- Moisture Staining evident - Monitor     Aluminum/Vinyl     Wood

### Covering

- Concrete/Clay Tile     Wood Shingle/Wood Shake     Asphalt/Composite Shingle  
 Metal     Other     Flat Roof Membrane     Tar & Grav

### Life Expectancy

- Typical     Middle     End     Exceeded

### Accessory

- Vent Stack     Solar Panels     Skylight(s)     Vent Caps

### Flashing

- Not Checked/Concealed     Chimney     Drip Edge     Flat Roof     Skylight  
 Roof to Wall     Stack     Valley     Roll Roofing     Replace When Re-roofing  
 Aluminum/Galvanized     Tarring/Concealed

Replace fascia flashing to prevent wood deterioration and possible water entry

### Chimney/Vent

- Wood     Metal     Furnace/Water Heater     Fireplace  
 Brick/Block/Stone     Stone     Corrosion

### Visible Flue Liner

- Clay     Metal     Block     Rain Cap/Screen Covered

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**Limitations**

No Access/Sealed

Entered

Hatch

Insulated

Pull Down

Stored Items

Looked In/Insp from opening

**Basement/Structure**

**Limitations**

- Finished/Partially Finished     
  Dry Ground     
  Clutter/Obstruction  
 Dry Weather/Drought

**Floor**

- Crack(s) - Typical. Seal + Monitor     
  Concrete     
  Carpet     
  Ceramic     
  Vinyl  
 Structural Wood Floor     
  Structural Concrete Floor

**Wall**

- Crack     
  Concealed     
  Concrete     
  Block     
  Brick/Stone     
  Wood  
 Drywall/Plaster

**Ceiling**

- Unfinished     
  Wood     
  Tile     
  Drywall/Plaster

Monitor previous staining to ensure leak remains inactive

further investigate source of sagging ceiling tiles and correct as required.

**Window**

- Binds - Adjust/repair     
  Not Tested     
  Thermal     
  Single Pane     
  Fixed Pane  
 Metal     
  Wood     
  Vinyl     
  Representative # Inspected/Tested

All windows were replaced and are in good condition.

**Operational**

**Door**

- Binds     
  Damaged     
  Pocket     
  Hinged     
  Wood     
  Metal  
 Hole(s)/Damaged     
  Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational**

**Lighting**

- Minimal     
  Unsecured     
  Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational**

**Heat Source**

- None     
  Electric     
  Air Register     
  Radiant/Baseboard

**Basement Stairway**

- Unsecured     
  Carpet     
  Wood     
  Worn

**Railing**

- Metal     
  Wood     
  Incomplete     
  None

*Install continuous handrail to promote safety*

**Floor Joist**

- Concealed     
  Engineered Joists     
  Solid Wood     
  Stained

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**Basement/Structure**

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**Bridging**

Concealed     Continuous     X-Metal     X-Wood     Solid Wood     None

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**Pipes/Ducts**

Unsecured     Leak     Insulated

## Electrical Service

### Service Entrance

No Conduit  Overhead  Underground  120/240V

### Entrance Cable

Concealed  Aluminum  Copper

### Main Disconnect

Switch/Cartridge Fuse  Breaker

### Service Size

Have Electrician Evaluate

Amps 100

*100 amp service, copper wire.*

### Distribution Panel

Not Opened  Non Standard Installation  Obstructed

Location Basement south wall

### Panel Rating

Room For Expansion

Amps 125

### Fuse

Breaker  GFCI Breaker  AFCI Breaker  Over-Fused  Cartridge  Glass

### Circuit Wires/Receptacles

Aluminum  Copper  Representative # of Outlets Inspected /  Switched Outlets

*Consult an electrician to repair the following partial list of defects:*

*-hot/neutral reversed at receptacle*

*-spliced and exposed connections should be terminated inside a junction box*

*-upgrade receptacles to include a ground connection*

*-install gfc receptacles near kitchen sink*

### Grounding

Concealed  Ground Rod  Water Main

### Bonding

Concealed  Water Pipe  Gas Pipe  Meter By-Pass



Heating

**Ignition**

- Electronic       Pilot & Thermocoupl

**Heat Shield**

- Missing       Corrosion       Soot       None

**Burn Chamber**

- Advise Adjustment       Soot

**Motor/Blower**

- Direct Drive       Noisy       Other

**Operational**

**Filter**

- Permanent       Missing       Inoperable       Undersized       Damaged

**Duct/Joint/Housing**

- Unsecured       Corrosion

**AC**

- Not Checked       Dirty       Central       Room Unit  
Approx. Age 16 years      Approx Size - Tons 2

**Operational**

*AC unit is 16 years old and past it's typical life expectancy of 15 years. Functioning as intended at time of inspection.*

Relevel unit to promote efficiency operation.

**Cooling Fuel Source**

- Electric

**Condensation Line**

- Improper Drain       Corrosion

**Refrigerant Line**

- Unsecured       Not Insulated



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## Plumbing Components

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### Limitation

- Finished Basement                       Private System

### Public Supply

- Concealed     Lead                       Galvanized     Plastic                       Copper                       Metered  
 Not Metered

Shut Off Location: Basement west wall

### Public Shut-Off Valve

- Not Tested     Corrosion                       Tagged/Labeled for Convenience

Replace corroded handle to prevent failure.

### Water Pressure

- Low                       Typical                       High

Typical water pressure for a half inch main.

### Water Quality

- Discoloration     Debris                       Odor                       Advise Well Water Quality Tes                       Typical

### Hose Bibb

- Not Checked     Shut-Off Valve     Unsecured                       Frost Free

**Operational**

### Distribution Piping

- Concealed     Plastic                       Galvanized                       Copper

Budget to replace galvanized sections of pipe . Galvanized plumbing is corrosive by nature. Monitor for decreased water flow indicating initial signs of failure.

### Cross Connection

- Kitchen                       Laundry                       Hose Bibb                       None Visible

### Waste Drainage

- Concealed     Cast Iron                       Plastic                       Copper                       Pump/Inspect Septic System

Sewer lines in old homes such as this are prone to tree root damage, low spots, fractures, or collapse due to deterioration over time. If line has not been replaced in modern time, it may well need to be in the near future. The best way to determine condition of the drain line requires camera/scope evaluation by a drain professional.

### Floor Drain

- None - a potential concern                       Drain Appeared Functional During Test

### Hot Water Tank

- With Heating System                       Gas                       Electric                       Some Corrosion Noted - Typical  
Age 19 Years                      Estimated Capacity -Litres 151

**Operational**

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## Plumbing Components

*Rental hot water tank is 19 years old and past its typical life expectancy of 15 years. Functioning at time of inspection.*

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### Life Expectancy

Typical     Exceeded     Middle     Middle/End

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### Fuel Shut-Off

Concealed  
Location beside

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### Relief Valve

No Test Lever     Corrosion     Other

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### Discharge Tube

Undersized     Discharge

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### Venting

Flue     Sidewall     Improper Rise     Unsecured     Corrosion     Soot

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### Burn Chamber

Not Checked     Needs Adjustment

**Laundry**

**Floor**

- Worn       No drain

**Wall**

- Patched       Unfinished       Crack - Typical       Uneven

**Ceiling**

- Patched       Unfinished       Crack - Typical       Uneven

Monitor previous staining to ensure leak remains inactive

**Window**

- Binds - Adjust/Repair       Not Tested       Thermal Pane       Single Pane  
 Treat Wood To Preserve/Protect       Storm Windows

**Operational**

**Lighting**

- None       Unsecured

**Operational**

**Tub/Faucet**

- Unsecured       Plastic       Slow Drain       Corrosion

**Operational**

**Trap/Drain**

- Drain stop disconnected/inoperable-repair if possible       Inoperative Trap       Slow Drain       Corrosion

*Replace corroded and disconnected pipe to regain function of tub.*

**Washer**

- Tested On/Off Function Only  
Make Maytag # A8977141CX

**Operational:      Yes**

All appliances were turned on using regular operating controls if they are connected or not shut down. All functions and different systems are not tested. The test simply comprises turning the appliances on to verify some basic functionality.

**Dryer**

- Tested On/Off Function Only  
Make Maytag # 62768463CR

**Operational:      Yes**

**Dryer Vent**

- Unsecured       To Crawlspace       Mostly Concealed       Plastic Duct

Dryer vent cleaning is recommended to increase efficiency and for fire safety. Inspect/clean on a regular basis.

Interior of dryer vent condition concealed-not inspected

**Heat Source**

- None       Thermostat       Electric       Air Register       Radiant  
 Radiator/Convactor

**All Baths**

**Location**

- Basement
  1st Floor
  2nd Floor
  3rd Floor

**Water Flow**

- Normal
  Suspect
  Low

**Floor**

- Worn
  Minor Cracking - Typical
  Stains/Minor Damage

**Wall**

- Uneven
  Patched - Typical
  Ceramic

**Ceiling**

- Uneven
  Minor Patching - Typical
  Minor Cracking - Typical

**Window**

- Binds - Adjust/Repair
  Not Tested
  Treat Wood To Preserve/Protect
  Thermal Pane
  Single Pane
  Storm Windows
  Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational**

**Door**

- Binds - Adjust/Repair
  Damaged
  Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational**

**Lighting**

- None
  Unsecured

**Operational**

**Exhaust Fan**

- Advise Installation
  Dirty - Clean for best function
  Noisy - Service/Repair/Replace

**Not Applicable**

Install exhaust fan to remove excess moisture, reduce related damages/deterioration and discourage an environment conducive to mold growth

**Sink**

- Worn
  Chip/Scratch
  Steel/Ceramic
  Solid/Granite

Showing signs relative to age and wear.

**Faucet**

- No Shut-off
  Unsecured
  Corrosion
  Minor Leakage at Handle - Repair

**Operational**

**Trap/Drain**

- Drain stop disconnected/inoperable-Repair/Slow Drain/Clean/Repair
  Corrosion - Monitor for leaks

**Vanity**

- Worn/Scratches
  Missing/Loose Hardware
  Prior Stains-No Leakage Now



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All Baths

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**Toilet**

**Operational**

No Shut-Off     Unsecured     Crooked - Monitor for leakage

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**Tub Faucet/Mixer**

**Operational**

Not Tested     Unsecured     Leaky-Secure/Repair/Replace

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**Shower Head**

**Operational**

Not Tested     Unsecured     Leaky-Secure/Repair/Replace

Basement washroom

**Location**

Basement  1st Floor  2nd Floor  3rd Floor

**Water Flow**

Normal  Suspect  Low

**Floor**

Worn  Minor Cracking - Typica  Stains/Minor Damage

**Wall**

Uneven  Patched - Typical  Minor Cracking - Typica

**Ceiling**

Uneven  Minor Patching - Typical  Minor Cracking - Typica

**Window**

Binds - Adjust/Repair  Not Tested  Treat Wood To Preserve/Protect  Thermal Pane  
 Single Pane  Storm Windows  Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational: Yes**

**Door**

Binds - Adjust/Repair  Minor Damage/Hole In Door  Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational: Yes**

**Lighting**

None  Unsecured

**Operational: Yes**

**Exhaust Fan**

Advise Installation  Dirty - Clean for best function  Noisy - Service/Repair/Replace

**Operational: Yes**

**Sink**

Worn  Chip/Scratch  Solid/Granite

**Faucet**

No Shut-off  Unsecured  Corrosion  Minor Leakage at Handle - Repair

**Operational: Yes**

**Trap/Drain**

Drain stop disconnected/inoperable  Slow Drain - Clean/Repair  Corrosion - Monitor for leaks

**Vanity**

Worn/Scratches  Missing/Loose Hardware  Prior Stains-No Leakage Now

**Toilet**

No Shut-Off  Unsecured  Crooked - Monitor for leakage

**Operational: Yes**



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Basement washroom

**Tub Faucet/Mixer**

Not Tested     Unsecured     Leaky-Secure/Repair/Replace

**Operational:    Yes**

**Shower Head**

Not Tested     Unsecured     Leaky-Secure/Repair/Replace

**Operational:    Yes**

**Heat Source**

None     Thermostat     Electric     Air Register     Radiant  
 Radiator/Convactor

**Kitchen**

**Floor**

- Worn       Minor Cracking - Typica       Stains/Minor Damage

**Wall**

- Uneven       Patched       Minor Cracking - Typica

Repair cracked plaster to reduce further separation.

**Ceiling**

- Uneven       Patched- Typical       Minor Cracking - Typica

**Window**

**Operational: No**

- Binds - Adjust/Repair       Not Tested       Thermal Pane       Single Pane  
 Treat Wood To Preserve/Protect       Representative # Inspected/Tested       Storm Window

Budget to replace. Windows showing signs relative to age and wear.

**Patio Door**

**Operational**

- Binds - Adjust/Repair       Sliding       Hinged       Dead Bolt  
 Minor Damage/Wear       Weather Stripping

**Lighting**

**Operational: Yes**

- None       Unsecured       Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Sink**

- Worn       Chip/Scratch

**Faucet**

**Operational**

- No Shut-Off Valve       Unsecured       Corrosion       Minor Leakage at Handle - Repair

**Trap/Drain**

- Slow Drain - Clean/Repair       Corrosion - Monitor for Leakage

**Counter**

- Unsecured       Caulk at Backsplash       Minor Damage/Scratches/Worn

**Cabinet**

- Worn/Scratches       Missing/Loose Hardware       Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Range Hood**

**Operational**

- Cooktop Exhaust       No Exhaust       No Light       Noisy

**Major Appliances (Built-in)**

- Tested ON/OFF only.       Did not Test All Functions/Cycles

All appliances were turned on using regular operating controls if they are connected or not shut down. All functions and different systems are not tested. The test simply comprises turning the appliances on to verify





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Kitchen

some basic functionality.

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**Stove/Cooktop****Operational**

Brand Frigidaire # VF05211164

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**Refrigerator****Operational**

Brand Mclary # GA112660

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**Heat Source**

- None       Thermostat       Electric       Air Register       Radiant  
 Radiator/Convactor

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**Interior Living Spaces**

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**Floor**

- Worn       Minor Cracking - Typica       Staining/Minor Damage

Further investigate to determine cause of floor sag on the first floor and correct as required

**Wall**

- Uneven       Patched - Typical       Minor Cracking - Typica  
 Wood Frame w/drywall/plaster

Further investigate cause of wall staining and correct as required . Dry at time of inspection.

Repair cracked plaster to reduce further separation.

**Ceiling**

- Uneven       Patched - Typical       Minor Cracking - Typica  
 Wood Frame w/drywall/plaster

Shows signs of wear relative to age.

**Window**

- Binds - Adjust/Repair       Not Tested       Fixed Pane       Single Pane      **Operational**  
 Treat Wood To Preserve/Protect       Representative # Inspected/Tested       Thermal Pane

**Lighting**

- None       Unsecured       Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational****Ceiling Fan**

- None       Unsecured

**Operational****Interior Doors**

- Binds - Adjust/Repair       Hinged       Closet door off track  
 Floor guides missing       Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational****Stairway**

- Carpet       Wood       Worn       Squeaks - Typical

**Railing**

- Wood/Metal       Incomplete       None

*Install continuous handrail to promote safety .*

*Install railing to promote safety*



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## Interior Living Spaces

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### Exterior Doors

- Binds - Adjust/Repair       Weather Stripping Missing/Improper       Dead Bolt  
 Minor Damage - Dent/Split/Worn       Sliding       Hinged

**Operational**

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### Heat Source

- Air Register       Electric       Radiator/Convactor       None  
 Radiant-Concealed



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## Additional Comments

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### General Comments

This is a Prelisting Inspection performed for the seller of the home in preparation for putting the home on the market for sale. This inspection is completed to ASHI and OAHl standards, is visual in nature, and does not address building code compliance issues which are the purview of municipal building inspectors.

**Property and Site**

**Building**



Rear image

**Driveway**



Driveway depression

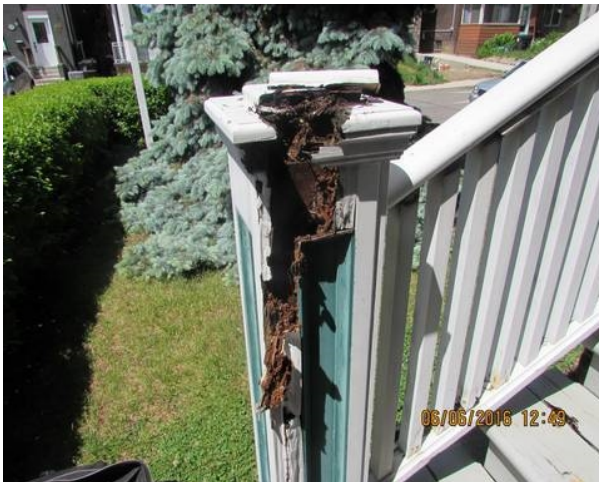
**Property and Site**

**Front Porch**



deteriorating mortar

**Front Porch Rail**



deteriorating railing



Boards are rotting

**Property and Site**

**Deck(s)/Patio(s)**



Missing hand rail



Deteriorating deck

**Exterior**

**Foundation Wall**



Deteriorating brick and mortar

**Exterior**

**Exterior Walls**



Hole in exterior wall



hole in exterior wall

**Roof Structure**

**Main Roof**



roof covering





**Roof Structure**

**Fascia/Soffit**



Wood fascia exposed

**Basement/Structure**

**Ceiling**



Sagging in ceiling tiles



Water stains

**Basement/Structure**

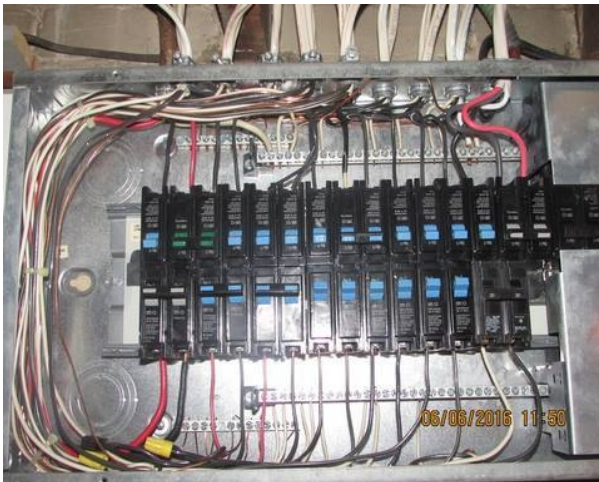
**Railing**



Incomplete railing

**Electrical Service**

**Distribution Panel**



Electrical panel

**Electrical Service**

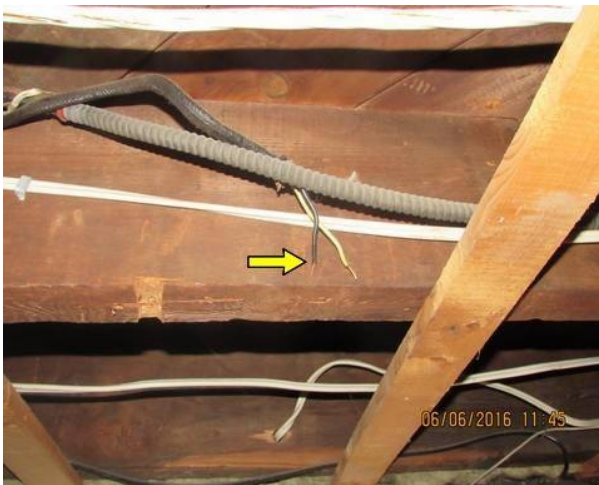
**Circuit Wires/Receptacles**



2 prong receptacle



Spliced connection



Exposed wires

**Heating**

**Heating System**



Furnace shut off



Mid efficiency furnace

**AC**



AC not level

**Plumbing Components**

**Public Supply**



Water meter



Corroded shut off handle

**Distribution Piping**



Galvanized pipe

**Laundry**  
**Trap/Drain**



Corroded and disconnected pipe

**Basement washroom**  
**Tub/Enclosure**



Cracked grout

**Interior Living Spaces**

**Wall**



Wall staining

**Ceiling**



Cracked plaster

**Interior Living Spaces**

**Railing**

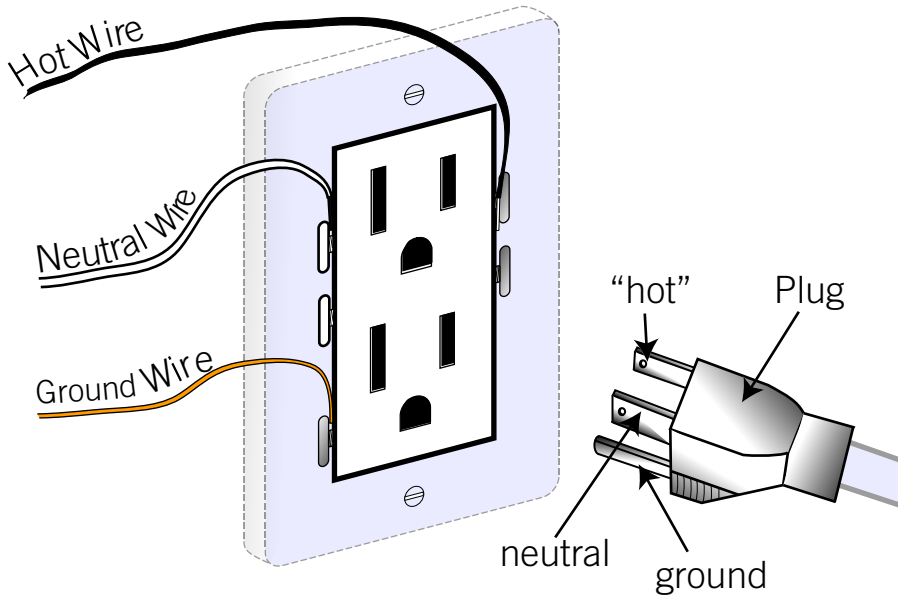


No railing



# Electrical Outlet Problems

The electrical outlet not only provides vital access to the electrical current that makes your house hum, but it also warrants deeper consideration for reasons of comfort and safety. Our Pillar To Post® inspectors have seen it all when it comes to incorrect outlet wiring, a safety hazard if left unattended. But before we discuss safety measures, let's start with a quick tour of this component and its mate, the plug.



Have you ever wondered why your electrical outlets have holes of different sizes and shape? To accommodate the plug is the obvious answer. But there is more to this relationship than meets the eye. Hidden behind the outlet is a series of wires that must be properly connected for the outlet's safe functioning. On a modern electrical outlet that accommodates a three-pronged plug, each hole serves a specific purpose: the round hole is for the ground pin on the plug; the small slot takes the small blade on the plug and connects to the "hot" wire in the outlet (the wire that can cause a shock); the large slot takes the large blade and connects to the "neutral" wire in the outlet.

Specific wires have to be connected to the proper terminals for an outlet's safe function. Correct installation is so important that our Pillar To Post® inspectors spot-check outlets with an outlet tester during every inspection.

## Reverse Polarity

The large slot and small slot on an electrical outlet, and the different-sized blades on a plug, designate their respective polarizations, and ensure that the plug goes in the outlet only one way, a safety feature that reduces the chances of shock. For instance, a light-bulb socket has exposed electrical connections, the threads being the most exposed part. But polarized socket threads are attached to the neutral wire to prevent someone from getting a shock when changing a light bulb.

If the electrical outlet itself is mis-wired with reverse polarity, the lamp socket threads described above will become "hot". If you touch the threads in the socket, or on the bulb as you screw it into the socket, you may get a shock.

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## Outlet Not Grounded

Pillar To Post® inspectors have also discovered outlets with the circular ground holes but with no ground wire connected. In older homes, sometimes the cable leading to the outlet does not have a ground wire, yet the outlet has nonetheless been upgraded to a modern grounded type. Some plug-in electrical devices need this ground connection for their built-in safety features. If the outlet appears to be grounded but is not, the device's safety features will not work.

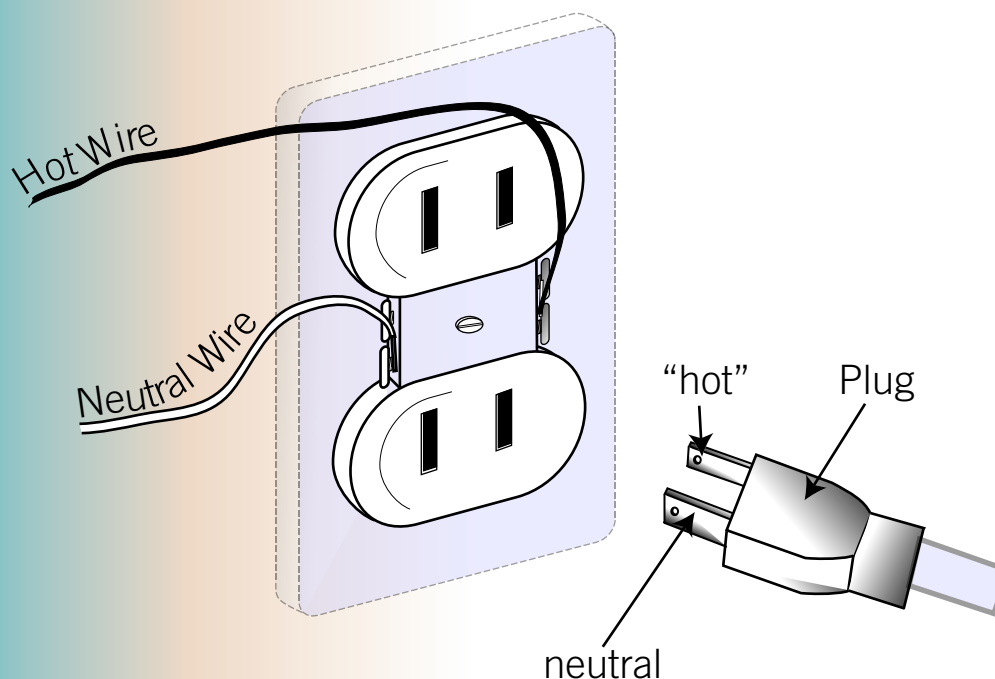
## Old Outlets

In older homes some outlets may have no ground slot at all. This does not represent a defect or safety concern, but you will not be able to plug in an electrical appliance that has a ground pin on the plug. Today, most plug-in appliances are not the grounded style and, therefore, do not use or have a ground pin on the plug because they are a double insulated design. In these cases, the old ungrounded outlet will work fine.

If you think it might be a good idea to simply cut off the ground pin to accommodate an outlet without a ground hole, think again. This procedure is doubly unsafe because it not only bypasses the grounding safety feature, but also it bypasses the polarizing feature since a de-pinned plug can be inserted into the outlet either way.

## Easy to Fix

An electrician can fix these outlet problems. Though your outlets may appear as minor considerations in the grand scheme of your home, your understanding and the safe installation of your outlets can prevent serious safety hazards.



Ungrounded Receptacle

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# Galvanized Steel Water Pipes

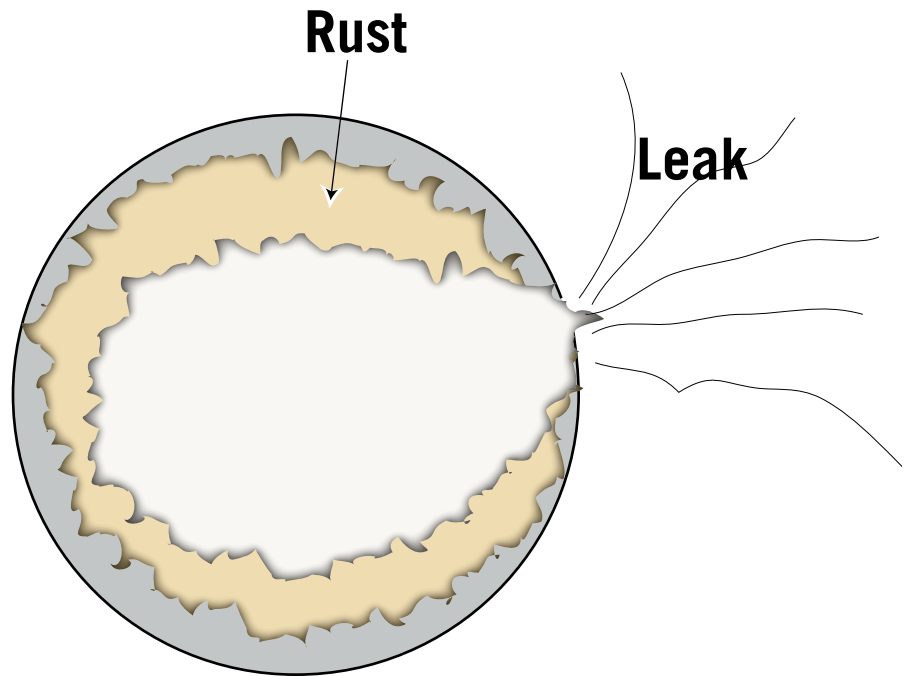
## What is Galvanized Steel Pipe?

Galvanized refers to a zinc coating added to steel pipes to protect them from rust. Galvanized steel was used for residential supply plumbing until around 1950. Although it was considered an effective resistant to corrosion at the time, it proved to have a limited service life of approximately 50 years. Over time, water passing through the pipes literally consumes the zinc. Once the zinc is gone, the exposed steel will then start to rust.

## The Problems

Galvanized steel pipe has not been used in residential homes since around 1950. Any galvanized steel found in homes today, therefore, will generally be well past its shelf date. If you have galvanized steel pipes, consider replacing them, especially since rust is not the only problem you will face. Other problems include:

- **Poor water flow**
  - galvanized steel pipe rusts from the inside out, diminishing the effective cross-sectional area. Any pipe found today will likely have an interior comprised mostly of rust.
- **Rust in the water** – you may see rust in the water when you first turn on the taps. It will, however, quickly clear as you run the water, but unsightly stains may develop on plumbing fixtures.
- **Leaks** – the pipe eventually rusts right through, usually at the threaded joints where the steel is the thinnest, causing leaks.
- **Home insurance** – many insurance companies will not insure homes with galvanized steel pipe because of the risk of major leaks.

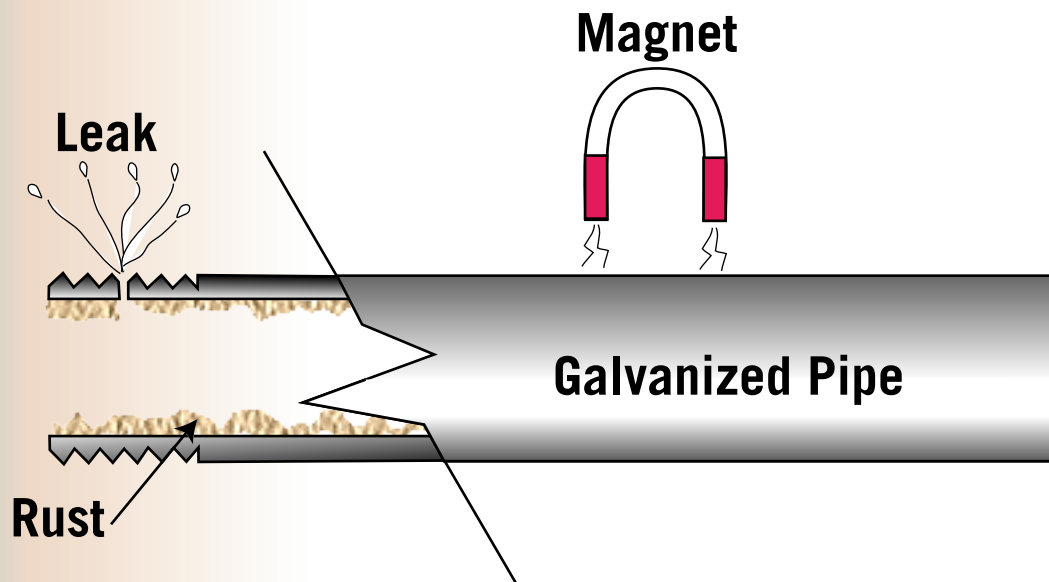


## Recognizing Galvanized Steel Pipe

- A silvery grey color indicates weathered galvanized steel pipe
- The pipe connections are often threaded
- A magnet will stick to galvanized steel pipe but not to copper, lead, or plastic
- The flow from the hot tap is distinctly different than the flow from the cold
- Rust stains can be found near the drain in a sink

Recognizing galvanized steel is easy, but *finding* it can be a challenge. If the plumbing in your home has been upgraded at some point, galvanized steel pipe may be located in areas difficult and/or disruptive to access. For instance, a past upgrade might have involved replacing the horizontal runs of pipe, which tend to corrode faster than the vertical runs (risers), leaving the latter, therefore, in place. Risers inside walls are often difficult or impossible to see. Furthermore, hot water pipes often get replaced while cold are left behind since the hot corrode faster than the cold. Galvanized steel pipes, therefore, tend to go undetected until a leak appears, or until the walls are opened during a renovation.

Although galvanized steel does not present a health hazard, you should still consider replacing it since you run the risk of major leaks that may cause serious damage to your house, resulting in expensive repairs. Replacement will also clear up minor problems, such as poor water flow. If you find galvanized steel in your home, contact a plumber to have it replaced. Do not wait for a leak!



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# Railings and Guards

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Injury Prevention) estimates that 40% of all unintentional deaths around the home are due to falls. One in five injuries that require a visit to an emergency room is due to a fall. Over 50% of these are falls that happen at home and most of these are falls from stairs and steps.

Railings and guards are designed to keep people from falling and injuring themselves. There is no doubt that properly installed railings and guards could help to improve these statistics.

A railing is something to grip onto when you go up and down a staircase. A guard is something that keeps you from falling off a staircase, deck or balcony. On a staircase, sometimes the railing doubles as a guard.

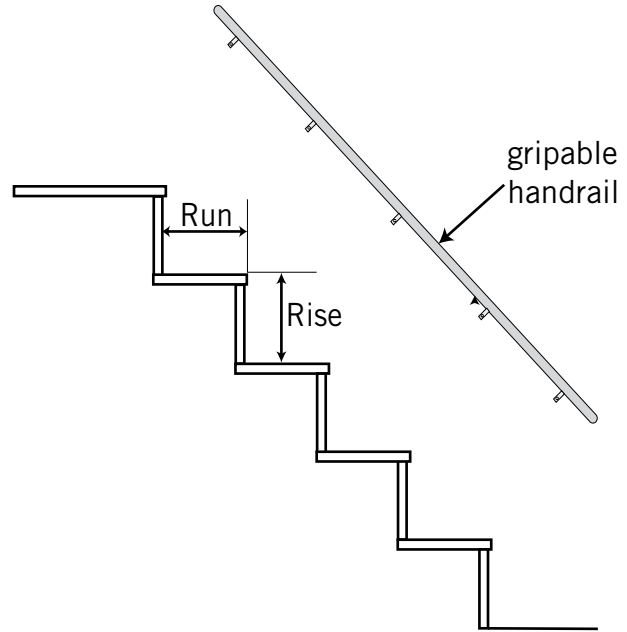
Many homes have missing or inappropriate railings and guards. One reason is that older homes did not have the same requirements as we do today. Home owners are not required to upgrade their homes to modern safety standards. If we had to upgrade, everybody would have to renovate their home every year just to keep up.

Pillar To Post home inspectors inspect your home with this in mind. We don't believe people should have to renovate their homes every year. Your railings and guards may be perfectly adequate for the time they were installed. At the same time we are concerned for your safety. We believe the solution is to provide you with information on common safety issues and let you decide if you would like to address the issue as a discretionary upgrade.

Here are a few common issues:

**Missing railings:** Sometimes a staircase has no railing at all, either because the previous owner removed it to make more room to move furniture up the stairs or because it was never installed in the first place. Ideally there should be a railing on any staircase that has more than two or three risers. The actual requirement depends on your area and when the home was built.

**Missing guard:** A common scenario is there is no guard on an open staircase to a



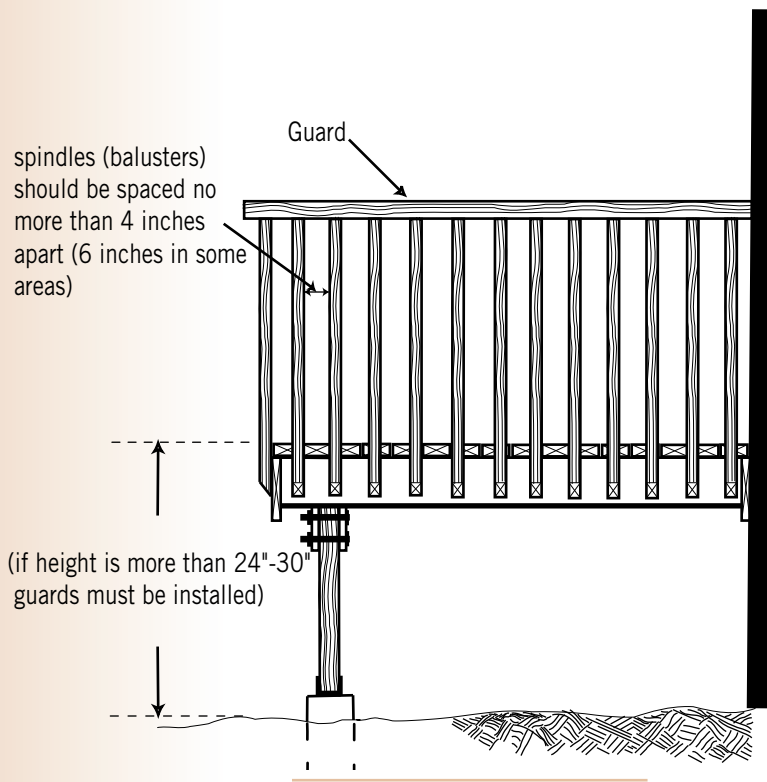
basement. In many areas, a guard was not required as long as there was a wall on one side and the basement unfinished. Today, many home owners have turned their basement into a recreation area or a playroom for children. The open staircase is now a danger. Ideally, a railing and guard should be added.

**Guard too low:** In some cases, an old home will have very low guards on staircases or balconies. This was the design at the time the home was built. Ideally, a guard should be 36 inches high, unless it's part of a staircase handrail in which case 34 inches would be ideal. In many areas, if the drop is six feet or more, a guard of 42 inches is required.

**Railing or guard has large openings:** Railings and guards may have vertical spindles (called balusters). These keep people from falling through. In some cases, the spacing between the spindles is so wide that a child could fall through. The requirements have changed over the years and also vary from area to area but most authorities believe that a maximum opening of four inches offers the best protection.

**Other things to look for:**

- Guards that incorporate climbable elements are not ideal. An example is a bench built into a guard or horizontal slats between the spindles on the guard. The concern is that children can climb them and fall over.
- Appropriate lighting for a staircase is a must. A dark stairwell is dangerous. That's all there is to it.
- Uneven stairs and stairs with non-uniform riser height are dangerous.



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# ASPHALT SHINGLES

Asphalt shingles are the most common type of sloped roof covering in North America. They are easy to install, reliable and arguably the best bang for the buck.



*Three layers of an asphalt shingle*

## Shingle Construction

While there are many types of asphalt shingles, the general construction is similar. There are three distinct layers -

- A base material that gives the shingle strength and shape.
- An asphalt layer that forms a waterproof barrier.
- A granular surface that reflects the ultraviolet radiation and gives the shingle durability, color and texture.

## Warranty

What's a 20 year shingle? 20 years is the manufacturer's limited warranty against defects. The number loosely represents the number of years the shingle could last in an ideal installation and ideal conditions. In practice, the reliable life is less than stated. Common shingle warranties are 15 to 50 years. The higher the warranty, the thicker the layer of asphalt and the thicker and heavier the shingle.

## Fiberglass or Organic Based Asphalt Shingles

The two common base layer materials are paper saturated in asphalt and fiberglass. While they are both asphalt shingles, they are often referred to as organic and fiberglass respectively.

Fiberglass base shingles were developed to use less of the expensive asphalt but still maintain the same shingle life. The main difference is that the fiberglass based shingle is thinner and lighter than the equivalent organic shingle, making it more desirable for installers.

Organic shingles are thicker and heavier and are considered to have better durability and tear resistance. Fiberglass based shingles are more flexible in hot weather and may perform better in wind storms. Both types are used successfully in most climates. There have been problems reported with fiberglass based shingles involving cracking of the shingles due to thermal stress (large temperature fluctuations). These problems are less prevalent now as new standards for manufacturing these shingles have been adopted by most manufacturers.

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## Architectural / Laminated Shingles

The most common asphalt shingle is the three tab shingle shown in the illustrations. Instead of three tabs, the architectural shingle has pieces of shingle material stuck on to create a more interesting pattern. Because there are pieces stuck on, it's often called a *laminated shingle*. Since it's a premium product, it will have a 25 to 30 year warranty as a minimum. Many styles are available.

## On The Roof

The illustration below shows a roof deck with the first few rows of shingles. The shingles are arranged so water sheds from one shingle to the next. The key point is that the system is not waterproof. It relies on gravity and the slope of the roof to shed water. Asphalt shingles are designed for a roof with a slope of 4 in 12 or greater. They can be used on low slope roofs as well but a special application technique is required.

**Flashing:** Asphalt shingles will shed water reliably. At roof penetrations or intersections, special treatment is required. For example, you can't reliably seal shingles to the edge of a skylight or chimney. Flashings are pieces of metal that are strategically placed to shed water over roof penetrations and onto the field of shingles without relying on sealants. Done properly, flashings will do the job for the life of the roof as they rely on nothing but gravity and slope. Flashings are often not done properly and are considered to be the weak point of any roof surface. Roofs rarely leak in the middle of a field of shingles, they leak at roof penetrations and intersections where flashing has been poorly installed or have become damaged.

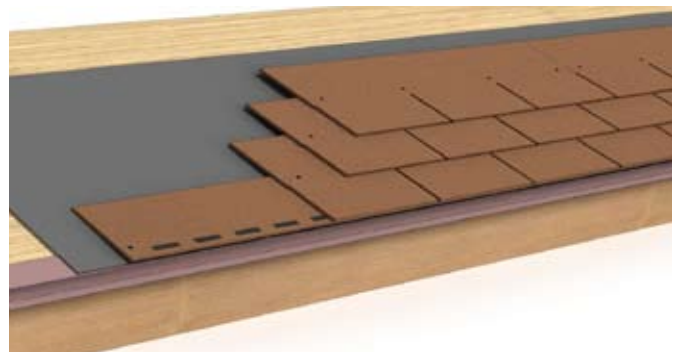
## Life Cycle & Reliability

Asphalt shingles wear out. Imagine an asphalt shingle roof surface as a sacrificial wear surface. The life cycle of the surface is always less than the advertised warranty period of the shingle.

**Wear:** Asphalt shingles deteriorate from exposure to ultraviolet radiation. For this reason, south and west facing shingles wear out much more quickly than north and east facing. Other wear factors include heat, inadequate venting of the roof space underneath, roof slope, leaves and debris, snow and ice.

**Reliability:** When the surface is near the end of its service life, it becomes unreliable. We are often asked if an old roof could last another year or two. The answer is usually, "yes but". Either live with a reduced reliability (increased risk of leakage) or improve the reliability by giving the roof a "once over", focusing on repairing flashings. Depending on the roof, it may not make economic sense to spend money repairing flashings that will only be torn off when the roof is ultimately resurfaced. Furthermore, the surface is hard to work with because it becomes very brittle when it's old.

**Multiple layers:** When it's time to resurface the roof, it is possible to install new asphalt shingles directly over the old. This is less expensive than stripping the existing surface. The trade-off is that the roof may not last as long and may not be as reliable. This is because old flashings are often used and are often not done properly and because the shingles are laid upon an uneven base. Some areas allow up to three layers while other areas allow only two.



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