

**Visual Property Inspection**

115 Craven Rd  
Toronto, ON M4L 2Z4

**Prepared for :**

The Weir Team

Phone No. : (416) 465-4545



**Inspected by :**

Allen Ottaway  
160 Goodman Dr.  
Oshawa, Ontario L1J 7V8

Phone: (289) 240-1189 Email: [allen.ottaway@pillartopost.com](mailto:allen.ottaway@pillartopost.com)



# Report Commentary

Date: 24-Sep-2016

115 Craven Rd, Toronto, ON M4L 2Z4

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**

Install handrail for safety

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## 2.0 Exterior

### 2.1 **Window Exterior**

All windows have been replaced recently and are in good condition.

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## 3.0 Roof Structure

### 3.1 **Main Roof**

Budget to replace worn shingles above dormer and shingles being used for siding at the front of the house. The rest of the shingles appear to be in good condition.

### 3.2 **Sec. Roof Life Expectancy**

Torched down membrane over flat roof is in good condition. Remove debris to prolong life. Seller advises it is approximately 8 years old. Typical life expectancy is 10 years. Inspect on an annual basis to maintain performance.

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## 4.0 Electrical Service

### 4.1 **Service Size**

100 amp service.

### 4.2 **Circuit Wires/Receptacles**

Install GFCI receptacles on the exterior and kitchen to promote safety.

Terminate exposed wires inside a junction box or remove to prevent hazards from exposed wire.

### 4.3 **Bonding**

Provide bonding to water and gas lines to promote ground system continuity. Concealed at time of inspection.

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## 5.0 Heating

### 5.1 **Heating System**

High efficiency furnace is 11 years old and functioning as intended. Typical life expectancy is 20 years.



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## **6.0**   Plumbing Components

### **6.1**   **Hot Water Tank**

Tank less hot water on demand system is 13 years old and functioning as intended. See info series sheet fore more information.

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## **7.0**   Interior Living Spaces

### **7.1**   **Railing**

Install handrail to promote safety

## Property and Site

### Limitations

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

### Conditions

- ☒ Sunny/Mostly Sunny
 ☐ Cloudy/Mostly Cloudy
 ☐ Rain/Wet Conditions  
☐ Snow/Ice Conditions  
 Approx. Temperature 20 Celsius

### 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.

### Landscaping

- ☒ Bushes/Hedge/Flower Bed
 ☐ Vine
 ☐ Slopes To House

### Front Porch Rail

- ☐ Wood
 ☐ Metal
 ☐ Composite

*Install handrail for safety*

### Front Porch Light

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

### Operational

### Deck(s)/Patio(s)

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

### Retaining Wall

- ☐ Wood
 ☐ Metal
 ☒ Concrete
 ☐ Leaning slightly - Typical

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## Exterior

### Limitations

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insulation Conceals             | <input type="checkbox"/> Clearance                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Debris/Obstruction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obstructed/No or Partial Access | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bushes/Vines/Tree Obstructions | <input type="checkbox"/> Snow/Ice Cover     |

### Foundation Wall

- |  |  |  |                                |
|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stone/Flagstone                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Brick               | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Block |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preserved Wood                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Concealed | <input type="checkbox"/> Hairline Cracking-typical |                                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completely Concealed |  |  |                                |

### Exterior Walls

- |  |                                 |  |                                      |
|--|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood/Composite | <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vinyl/Aluminum | <input type="checkbox"/> Brick/Stone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On Wood Framing           |                                 |  |                                      |

Ensure proper caulking and weather seal at all required locations and junctions such as windows, doors, dissimilar materials junctions, etc.

### Window Exterior

- |                               |                                |                                |   |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal | <input type="checkbox"/> Vinyl | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood Int/Vinyl or Metal Cla |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|

*All windows have been replaced recently and are in good condition.*

### Exterior Lighting

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not all lights tested | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsecured - repair |
|--|---|

### Operational

- |   |
|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Representative # Inspected/Tested |
|---|

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## 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 10 to 15 years

*Budget to replace worn shingles above dormer and shingles being used for siding at the front of the house.  
The rest of the shingles appear to be in good condition.*

### Gutter/Downspout

☐ Galvanized ☐ Plastic ☒ Aluminum ☐ Copper ☐ Below Ground Discharge  
☐ Above Ground Discharge

### 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

Estimated # of Layers 1

### Life Expectancy

☐ Typical ☐ Middle ☐ End ☐ Exceeded ☒ Middle/end

### 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

### Chimney/Vent

☐ Wood ☐ Metal ☐ Furnace/Water Heater ☐ Fireplace  
☒ Brick/Block/Stone ☐ Stone ☐ Corrosion

Repair mortar deterioration to prevent water entry and related damages.

### Visible Flue Liner

☐ Clay ☒ Metal ☐ Block ☐ Rain Cap/Screen Covered

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Roof Structure

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**Sec. Roof Life Expectancy**

☐ Typical    ☒ Middle    ☐ End    ☐ Exceeded

*Torched down membrane over flat roof is in good condition. Remove debris to prolong life. Seller advises it is approximately 8 years old. Typical life expectancy is 10 years. Inspect on an annual basis to maintain performance.*

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Attic

### Limitations

☒ No Access/Sealed

☐ Insulated

☐ Stored Items

☐ Looked In/Insp from opening

☐ Entered

☐ Hatch

☐ Pull Down



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## 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.*

### Distribution Panel

☒ Not Opened ☐ Non Standard Installation ☒ Obstructed

Location 1st floor west 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/Tests ☐ Switched Outlets

*Install GFCI receptacles on the exterior and kitchen to promote safety.*

*Terminate exposed wires inside a junction box or remove to prevent hazards from exposed wire.*

### Grounding

☐ Concealed ☐ Ground Rod ☒ Water Main

### Bonding

☒ Concealed ☐ Water Pipe ☐ Gas Pipe ☐ Meter By-Pass

*Provide bonding to water and gas lines to promote ground system continuity. Concealed at time of inspection.*

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## Heating

### Data Plate

☐ Not Legible ☐ Incomplete

Model: Goodman

BTU Input: 69000

Estimated Age: 11 years

### Limitations

☐ System Operating In AC Mode

☐ System Shut Down/Not Tested

### Thermostat/Humidistat

**Operational**

☐ Unsecured

☒ Programmable

☐ Standard

### Heat Type

☐ Convector - Wall Unit

☒ Forced Air

☐ Radiator/Baseboard

☐ Radiant - In-Floor

### Burner Type

☐ Conventional

☐ Mid Efficiency

☒ High Efficiency

### Heating Fuel Source

☒ Gas

☐ Electric

☐ Propane

### Fuel Source Shut Off Location

☒ Beside

### Heating System

**Operational**

☐ Advise Service/Repair Contract

☐ Verify Service Hist w/Selle

*High efficiency furnace is 11 years old and functioning as intended. Typical life expectancy is 20 years.*

### Fresh Air Supply

☐ Internal

☒ External

### Venting

☐ Metal

☐ Corrosion

☒ Sidewall/Plastic

☐ Flue

### Life Expectancy

☐ Typical

☒ Middle

☐ Exceeded

☐ Middle/End

### Gas Burner

**Operational**

☐ Not Checked

### Ignition

☒ Electronic

☐ Pilot & Thermocoupl

### Heat Shield

☐ Missing

☐ Corrosion

☐ Soot

☐ None

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## Heating

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### Burn Chamber

☐ Advise Adjustment

☐ Soot

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### Motor/Blower

**Operational**

☒ Direct Drive

☐ Noisy

☐ Other

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### Filter

☒ Disposable

☐ Missing

☐ Inoperable

☐ Undersized

☐ Damaged

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### Duct/Joint/Housing

☐ Unsecured

☐ Corrosion

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## Plumbing Components

### Public Supply

☐ Concealed
 ☐ Lead
 ☐ Galvanized
 ☐ Plastic
 ☒ Copper
 ☒ Metered

☐ Not Metered

Shut Off Location: Kitchen south wall

### Public Shut-Off Valve

☒ Not Tested
 ☐ Corrosion
 ☐ Tagged/Labeled for Convenience

### Water Pressure

☐ Low
 ☒ Typical
 ☐ High

### Water Quality

☐ Discoloration
 ☐ Debris
 ☐ Odor
 ☐ Advise Well Water Quality Tes
 ☒ Typical

### Distribution Piping

☐ Concealed
 ☐ Plastic
 ☐ Galvanized
 ☒ Copper

### 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

Concealed at time of inspection.

### Main Cleanout

☒ Concealed

### Hot Water Tank

☒ With Heating System
 ☒ Gas
 ☐ Electric
 ☐ Some Corrosion Noted - Typical

Age 13 years

### Operational

*Tank less hot water on demand system is 13 years old and functioning as intended. See info series sheet fore more information.*

### Life Expectancy

☒ Typical
 ☐ Exceeded
 ☐ Middle
 ☐ Middle/End

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## Plumbing Components

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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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## 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

### Operational

### Sink

☐ Worn ☐ Chip/Scratch ☒ Solid/Granite

### 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

### Toilet

☐ No Shut-Off ☐ Unsecured ☐ Crooked - Monitor for leakage

### Operational

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All Baths

**Tub/Enclosure**

- ☐ Ceramic/Tile    ☐ Solid Surface/Marble    ☐ Fiberglass    ☒ Plastic Panels  
☐ Minor Mildew Stains-Treat/Clean    ☐ Worn - Scratches/Chips

**Tub Faucet/Mixer**

- ☐ Not Tested    ☐ Unsecured    ☐ Leaky-Secure/Repair/Replace

**Operational**

**Shower Head**

- ☐ Not Tested    ☐ Unsecured    ☐ Leaky-Secure/Repair/Replace

**Operational**

**Heat Source**

- ☐ None    ☐ Thermostat    ☐ Electric    ☒ Air Register    ☐ Radiant  
☐ Radiator/Convactor

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## Kitchen

### Floor

☐ Worn ☐ Minor Cracking - Typica ☐ Stains/Minor Damage

### Wall

☐ Uneven ☐ Patched ☐ Minor Cracking - Typica

### Ceiling

☐ Uneven ☐ Patched- Typical ☐ Minor Cracking - Typica

### Patio Door

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

**Operational**

### Lighting

☐ None ☐ Unsecured ☒ Representative # Inspected/Tested

**Operational**

### Sink

☐ Worn ☐ Chip/Scratch

### Faucet

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

**Operational**

### 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

☒ Cooktop Exhaust ☐ No Exhaust ☐ No Light ☐ Noisy

**Operational**

### Exhaust vent

☐ Unsecured ☐ Ductless ☒ Concealed ☐ To Exterior

### Filter

☐ Missing - Install for safety ☐ Unsecured ☐ Damaged ☐ Greasy

### 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



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**Kitchen**

functions and different systems are not tested. The test simply comprises turning the appliances on to verify some basic functionality.

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

Brand Frigidaire # VF55216640

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**Refrigerator****Operational**

Brand Frigidaire # BA32131095

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**Heat Source**

☐ None      ☐ Thermostat      ☐ Electric      ☒ Air Register      ☐ Radiant  
☐ Radiator/Convactor

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## Interior Living Spaces

### Floor

☐ Worn ☐ Minor Cracking - Typica ☐ Staining/Minor Damage

### Wall

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

### Ceiling

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

Monitor previous staining to ensure leak remains inactive. Dry at time of inspection.

### Window

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

### Operational

### 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 handrail to promote safety*

### Exterior Doors

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

### Operational

### Heat Source

☒ Air Register ☐ Electric ☐ Radiator/Convactor ☐ None  
☐ Radiant-Concealed

## 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.

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**Property and Site**

**Front Porch Rail**



Missing handrail

**Roof Structure**

**Main Roof**



Worn shingles used as siding



Deteriorated shingles over dormer

## **Roof Structure**

### **Chimney/Vent**



Deteriorated mortar

### **Sec. Roof Life Expectancy**



Debris on flat roof

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## **Electrical Service**

### **Circuit Wires/Receptacles**



Exposed wires

## **Heating**

### **Heating System**



High efficiency furnace



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## **Plumbing Components**

### **Public Supply**



Water meter and main shut off

## **Interior Living Spaces**

### **Ceiling**



Water stains

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## **Interior Living Spaces**

### **Railing**



Missing handrail

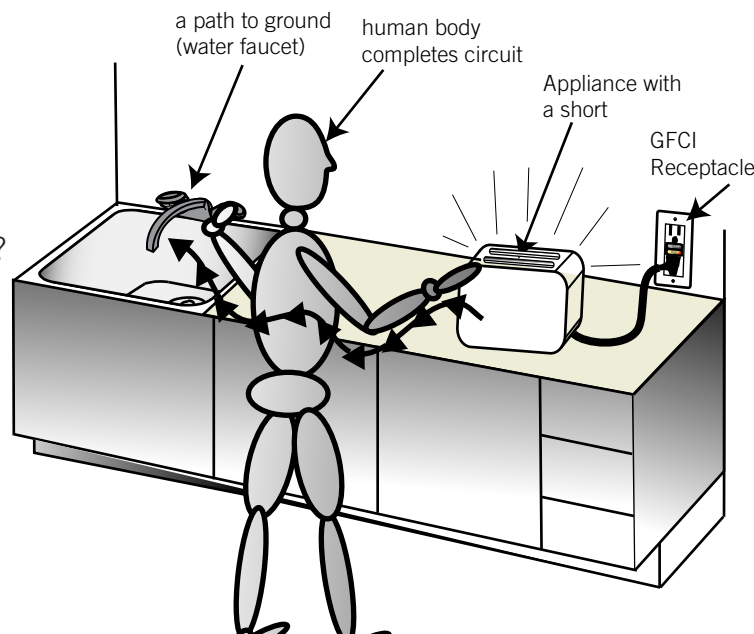


# Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter

A ground fault circuit interrupter, or GFCI, is an inexpensive electrical safety device that can protect you and your family members from a serious electric shock.

Have you ever had an electric shock? While it is an unpleasant experience, it is not usually fatal. However, given the right conditions, the same shock could be fatal! If your body makes a solid connection to the ground, the shock could easily kill you. Here are two examples of a solid ground connection:

- If you are physically standing or touching the ground outside
- If you touch something conductive, such as any part of the plumbing system in your house, that is also touching the ground outside



In other words, if you decide to operate your hedge trimmer in your bare feet and you get a shock, you may not survive it.

## How Can a GFCI Help?

A GFCI is a special electrical outlet that prevents electric shocks in situations such as the ones described above. The GFCI monitors the electrical current leaving from and returning to the outlet. The current leaving the outlet should be the same amount as the returning current. If the current returning is less than that which leaves, the missing current could be passing through somebody's body to the ground. The GFCI detects the mismatch and shuts off the electrical outlet in a split second.

## Where Should GFCI Outlets Be Located?

GFCI outlets should be installed in any area that presents a risk of an electric shock with a direct path to the ground. In other words, anywhere you might directly touch the ground outside or anywhere where you might touch a part of the plumbing system. Some smart GFCIs locations are:

- Exterior outlets
- Kitchen counter outlets (not common in Canada)
- Bathroom outlets
- Garage outlets
- Outlets in unfinished basements

## Information Series

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This is not a complete list. Areas near swimming pools, hot tubs, and so on should also include this type of outlet.

GFCIs are not perfect, however, and have been known to “nuisance trip” when connected to certain types of electrical equipment. For this reason, exceptions to the suggested (or required) locations for GFCIs exist. For example, a regular outlet would be a better choice for a freezer in your garage since the potential for nuisance tripping of the GFCI is high and might go undetected for days, leading to spoiled food in the shut-off freezer.

## Remote GFCI

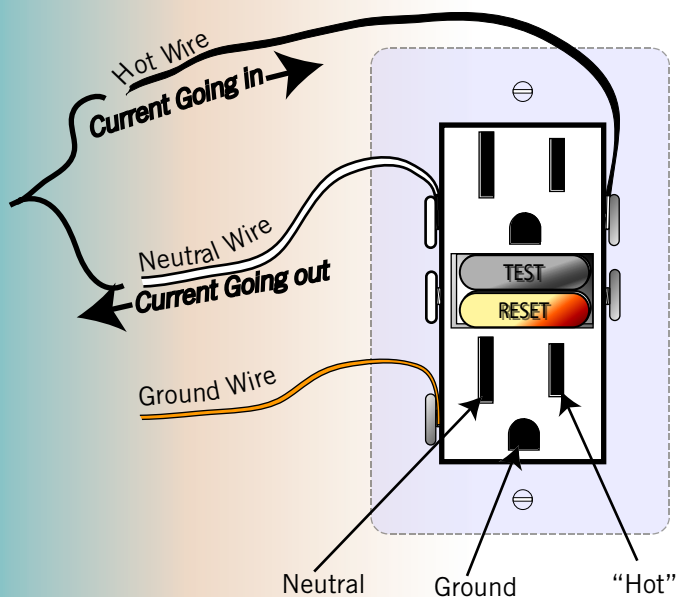
Several electrical outlets usually connect to a single circuit in an average home. A single GFCI outlet will protect all of the outlets in the circuit, even if the other outlets are not GFCIs. But the GFCI outlet must be the first outlet in the string in order for it to properly protect the other outlets, and, of course the connections have to be properly made.

Remote GFCIs sometimes cause confusion for home owners in the following ways:

- A home owner thinks the bathroom does not have a GFCI because the outlet looks like a standard one. The standard outlet under the protection of a remote GFCI should have a sticker indicating its GFCI protection. The problem is, the sticker does not stick forever. A Pillar To Post® inspector can test this for you.
- A standard outlet that does not appear to work in a bathroom or kitchen may actually be attached to a remote GFCI outlet that has nuisance tripped. Before calling an electrician, check the GFCI outlets in other bathrooms and in other locations around the house.

## Testing

GFCIs are easy to test and should be tested every month. Simply press the test button on the outlet. You should hear a pop as the reset button pops out a little. To reset, just press the reset button. If the GFCI fails to trip, or if you are unable to reset it, it is time for an electrician to replace it.



Special breakers also provide GFCI protection to the entire circuit. These breakers can be installed instead of GFCI outlets. The GFCI breaker should also be tested monthly. You will recognize this breaker from the test and reset button.

GFCIs can help prevent injury and death from electric shock. It is a small device worth having to ensure the safety of your family members.

*Pillar To Post®, the home of home inspection*

We welcome your comments and suggestions for future Information Series topics  
info@pillartopost.com 1-800-294-5591 www.pillartopost.com

# 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.

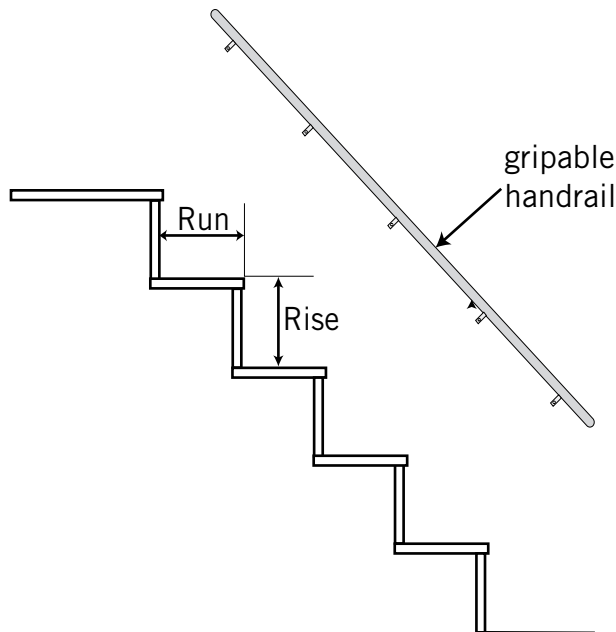
Many homes have missing or inappropriate railings and guards. One reason is that older homes did not have the same requirements as we do today. Home owners are not required to upgrade their homes to modern safety standards. If we had to upgrade, everybody would have to renovate their home every year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



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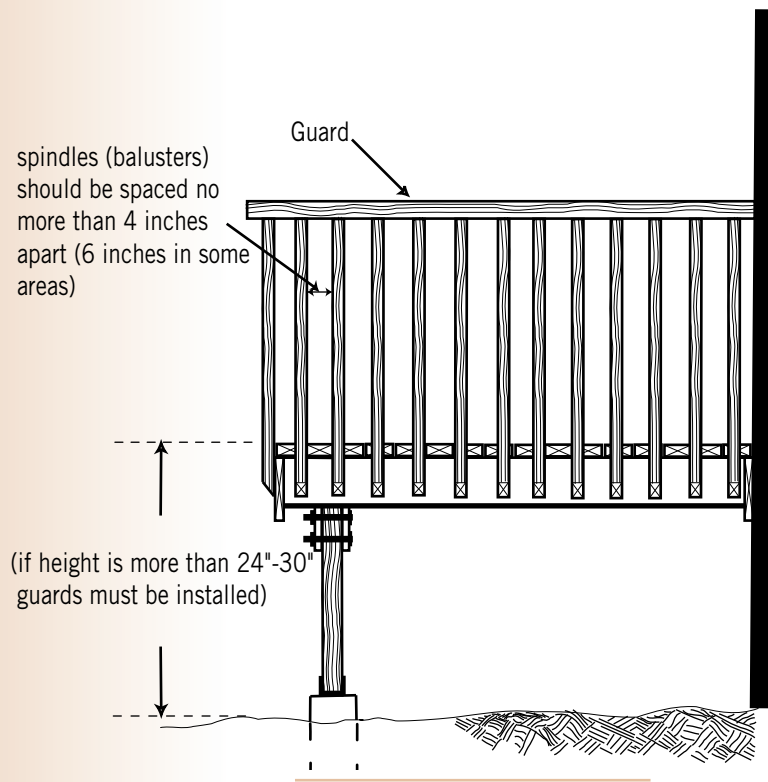
basement. In many areas, a guard was not required as long as there was a wall on one side and the basement unfinished. Today, many home owners have turned their basement into a recreation area or a playroom for children. The open staircase is now a danger. Ideally, a railing and guard should be added.

**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.



# Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide, or CO, a byproduct of incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, is a colorless, odorless gas. Breathing CO reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen. In severe cases, CO can cause death.

Defective or malfunctioning fossil fuel appliances, or inappropriate use of appliances that burn fossil fuel close to or inside the home can pose a serious health hazard. Here are a few examples of dangerous operations:

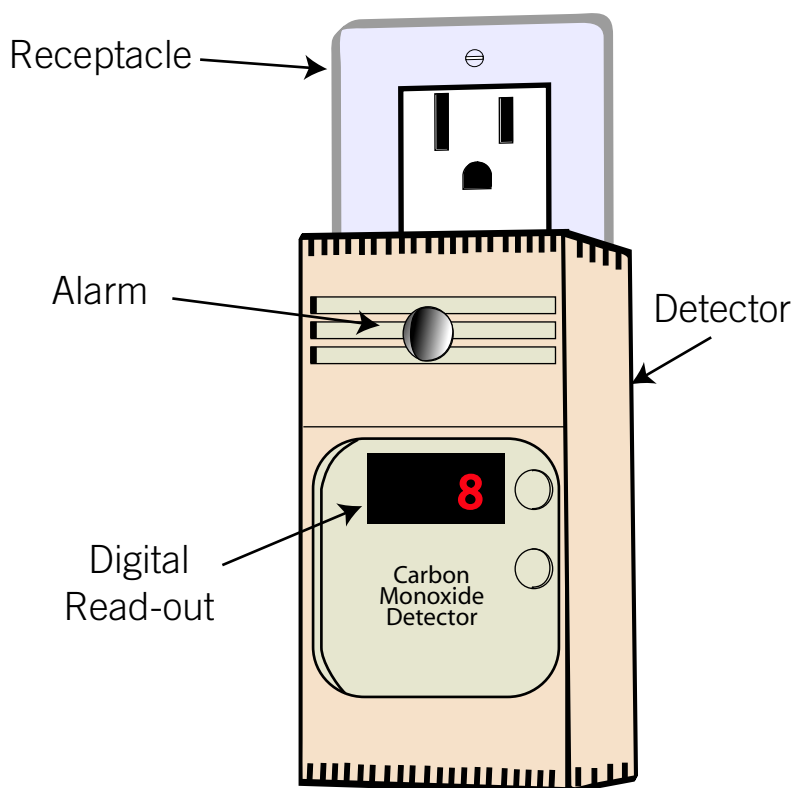
- Running an automobile or gas lawn mower inside the garage
- Operating a barbeque inside the home
- A gas or oil burning furnace with a blockage in the chimney
- Kerosene space heaters
- Operating a generator in the home during a power failure

## Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, weakness, chest pain, confusion, and loss of consciousness. Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to death. Low level poisoning may go unnoticed because it may be mistaken for the flu.

## Carbon Monoxide Detector

You should have at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home. In some geographic areas, a CO detector is required by law. The CO detector should be placed where you can hear it if it goes off when you are asleep. A CO detector does not have to be placed on the ceiling, since unlike smoke, CO has approximately the same weight as air so it mixes



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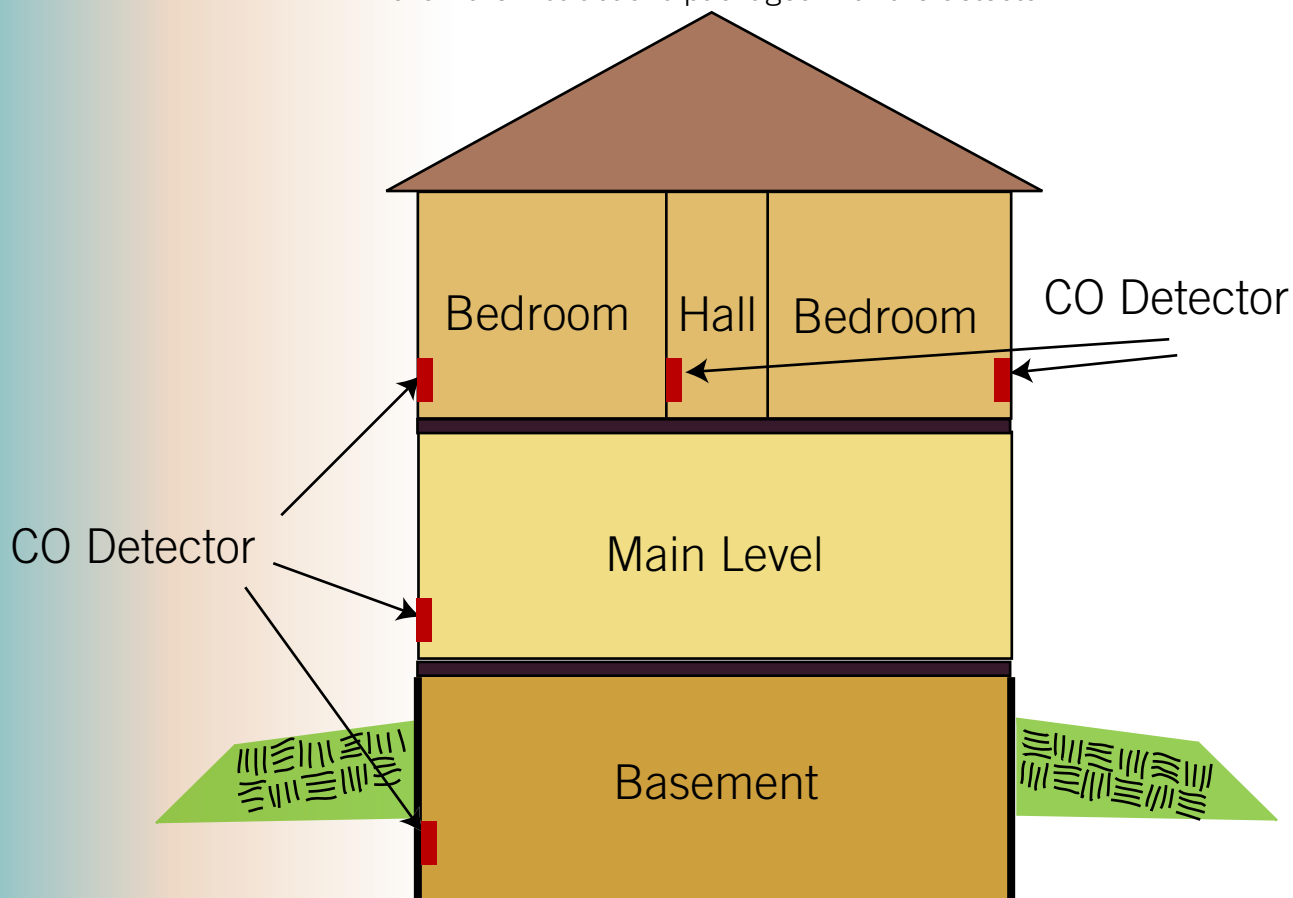
uniformly throughout the room rather than floating up to the ceiling. To avoid false alarms, do not install the detector next to heating and cooking appliances, vents, flues, or chimneys. Make sure you read and follow the operating, placement, and testing instructions that come with the detector.

If the carbon monoxide detector alarms, take it seriously.

## Avoiding CO Poisoning

- Have your heating systems serviced every year by a qualified technician.
- Have your fireplace chimney cleaned and inspected every year.
- Install at least one CO detector in your home and replace the batteries twice per year.
- Open the garage door prior to starting your car; drive the car out promptly. Do not leave it idling in the garage. Do not use a remote car starter when the car is in the garage.
- Do not use a charcoal or propane barbeque in the home.

If you are installing only one carbon monoxide (CO) detector, it should be located where you can hear it if it goes off when you are sleeping. For greater safety, multiple CO detectors can be installed throughout the home. Follow the instructions packaged with the detector.



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info@pillartopost.com 1-800-294-5591 www.pillartopost.com



# HOT WATER ON DEMAND

Imagine a touch-screen pad next to your tub. Enter a desired temperature and the tub fills with water at exactly that temperature. Imagine never running out of hot water again. Welcome to hot water on demand water heaters. There is more to hot water on demand water heaters than endless hot water. They save energy too.



The concept is not new. In fact, these systems have been around for over 40 years and are common where the cost of energy is high such as Europe and Japan.

## How It Works

A standard hot water heater heats a large reservoir of water over a long period of time. When you need hot water, it's there waiting for you. Once you use it up, you have to wait if you want more. A hot water on demand system heats water as you need it using gas or electricity. When you turn on a hot water tap:

1. Cold water flows into the system triggering the flow sensor
2. Powerful burners ignite and heat the water as it flows through the heat exchanger
3. The water comes out at the required temperature.

There is no tank or reservoir of water to heat up. For this reason, a hot water on demand system is commonly called a "tankless water heater".

## Tank Versus Tankless

When your hot water heater gets old should you replace it with another standard system or should you install a hot water on demand system?

There are three key benefits of a hot water on demand system:

- All the hot water you want.
- More energy efficient because there are no standby heat losses. Standard systems use energy to maintain the water temperature.
- A hot water on demand system is a small box mounted on the wall. Find some extra floor space by removing your old hot water tank.

The main down sides are:

- The up-front costs are much higher, including purchase price and installation costs.

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- It takes an experienced technician to select and install a system properly. There are lots of ways to go wrong with a hot water on demand system.
- If your power goes out, you don't get any hot water. With a tank system, at least you have a tank full of hot water.

## Saving Energy

A hot water on demand system is energy efficient because there is no reservoir of water to keep hot. The **operating efficiency** is not a good measure when comparing a standard system and a tankless system because it does not account for the standby losses. A better point of comparison is the **energy factor**. The energy factor is an estimate of the total energy cost for hot water. For example, the energy factor for a typical tank style hot water heater is about 0.55. This means that on average, for every dollar you spend on gas you get about 55 cents worth of hot water. A modern gas fired tankless system has an energy factor of about 0.84.

## Saving Money

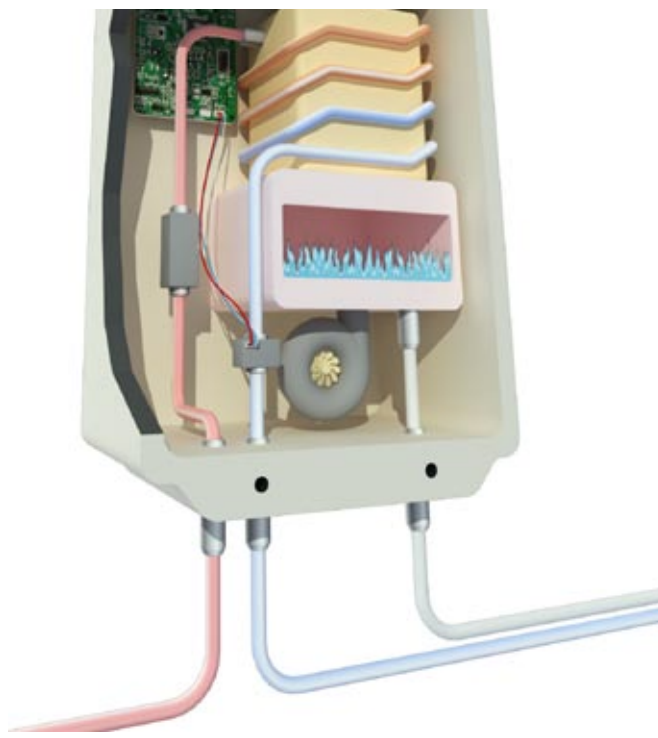
You can save energy with a hot water on demand system but can you save money? Is the higher up-front cost justified by the energy savings. Most product literature is misleading. A 20% energy saving is a realistic comparison of a modern tank system and a modern tankless system. Depending on your energy cost and the amount of hot water you use in a year, the payback may be 4 to 9 years. This is not bad when you consider that these systems last about 20 years compared to about 10 years for a standard tank hot water heater. If you are planning to live in your house for a while, you will eventually benefit from a lower life-cycle cost and from lower energy costs.

## Skilled Technician

Thinking of installing a hot water on demand system? A skilled and experience technician is a must!

A hot water on demand system requires a powerful burner to heat the water as it flows past the flame. The burner has to be powerful enough to heat the water even if several hot water taps are running at the same time. A skilled technician will know how to size the unit to supply the needs of the home. Many less skilled installers get this wrong. You have to consider how cold the water is to start with. For example, consider two identical houses, one located in Florida and the other located in Ohio. The home in Ohio will need a much more powerful burner because the water entering the system may be only 45 degrees in the winter!

A skilled installer will be able to anticipate problems such as an inadequate gas line. The burner in a tankless water heater is so powerful it needs a large gas flow rate to feed it. If the existing gas line is not large enough, a new line will have to be installed.



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