

CAHI MONTHLY NEWS



President's Corner

Thank you all for the emails and kind words regarding my surgery and hospitalization. Having surgery to correct my incarcerated umbilical hernia was not elective I can assure you. But I guess I did need something to break up the nice stretch of work I was having. I would also like to thank the board for the wonderful fruit basket they sent to my family. I did have to wait a few days before I could eat any of the goodies it was filled with.

While I was in the hospital recovering I realized that we are all human, all infallible and all subject to being struck down at a moment's notice. Most of us are self-employed and when that moment hits and you realize that you are not going on the next several scheduled inspections, or scheduling the calls that are coming in, reality hits you. How long will I be out? How am I going to pay the bills? Will I stay in business? It is a scary situation, the unknown. I always tell my clients, I can and will make a call on the things we see, but as a home inspector I am most concerned about what we can't see and do not know.

So while recuperating, I made a few calls to get some information on disability insurance. I was gathering the info for myself and also to pass on to all of you for future reference. I spoke to a rep at Mutual of Omaha. The fellow there was very helpful.

First let me clarify some parameters. There is short term and long term disability. Short term is 12 to 24 months coverage during disability. Long term is 5 years to age 67. There is disability coverage due to accident only, and coverage due to accident, health issue or any other issue that keeps you out of work.

Waiting period means how long you are out of work before the coverage actually begins, 30, 60 and 90 days.

Using my age, 58, being in generally good health, and the risk of our profession, I got some basic numbers:

Short term disability due to accident and health concerns with a maximum payout of \$3500 per month and a waiting period of 60 days is \$336.36 per month. \$1500 payout per month is \$165.68. A 90 day waiting period makes these monthly premiums lower, as does a lower age brackets. And of course, long term coverage will be more expensive. This price is at a 15% discount for being a member of an organization.

Obviously this insurance is not cheap. But, we must do something to ensure we can pay the bills if we are out of work for an extended period of time. Putting the \$336 a month away in a separate account keeps it at your disposal, but only adds up to just over one month's compensation over the period of a year.

I was also fortunate to have Dan Kristiansen, Scott Monforte, Dean Aliberti, Kevin Morey, Al Dingfelder, Ed Malloy and Woody Dawson, and John McKenzie all offer to assist me with my inspections when possible as I will be returning to work with some restrictions. This my friends is what I feel CAHI is ultimately about. This is where gathering with your fellow members at a meeting and getting to know them as friend's trumps getting your credits online or being a member of an online association. Making an offer to help a fellow inspector while running your own business and family matters is truly a show of camaraderie...and is GREATLY appreciated.

I also found out in about 30 minutes of conversation at our recent month gathering that many others have been out of commission with a medical issue or injury in the recent past. I encourage all of you to contact someone on the board if your ability to work has been compromised in any way. We can put the word out through an email blast and perhaps have members pitch in when they can to get you through the tough times.

Thank you again for your thoughts and kind words! Stan

MONTHLY MEETING – Details & Info

CAHI's regular monthly meetings are held at the Holiday Inn located at 201 Washington Ave (RT 5), North Haven. Meetings are free to members. Most meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm.

Guests are always welcome! Guests may attend 2 free monthly meetings to experience our presentations, meet our members, and receive a CE attendance certificate.

Joining CAHI may be done at anytime of the year through our Membership Page

May 2015 Volume 8, Issue 5

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Corner.....1
 CAHI Reward2
 A Few Good People Wanted.....2
 CAHI New Board Member.....2
 Article: Ant Inspection..... 3
 Article: Barbeque Safety..... 5
 Article: Knob and Tube Wiring.....7
 Article: Pest Birds.....9
 Article: Freebies to NOT give out.....12
 Article: Mosquitoes: FAQ's.....14
 CAHI Board & Contact.....16

Meeting Dates

May 27th

"Septic and Sewer" by Bill Hall from Windriver Environmental. Bill has over 40 years of experience in the Sewer / Septic installation and repair service industry. Bill will talk about the Trenchless Sewer - Septic line repair replacement system.

June Info

TBA

Regular Meeting

Location:

(otherwise noted)

Best Western

201 Washington Ave.

North Haven, CT. (203)

239-6700



Newsletter Article or Guest Speaker

CAHI will pay \$25.00 to any member who provides us with a guest speaker for one of our monthly meetings or for any article that is submitted and used in the monthly newsletter.

Articles must be a PDF or Word document. Articles should pertain to our industry.

We will review articles for content and reserve the right to edit, use and/or refuse them.

WANTED, A FEW GOOD PEOPLE!



CAHI can be a much more powerful organization and can bring so much more to the table if more members became involved with the board. We have ideas to be explored that can benefit us all. However, the effort to make the month to month operation of our organization takes all of our available time as board members. We ask for volunteers to work on committees that will strengthen our organization and move us far beyond any home inspection organization in the northeast.

We are currently seeking an Information Tech savvy member to operate the back end of our website. We are also looking for help with mailings, web research, etc that can be done from your home, with no requirement to attend board meetings. Anyone interested, please contact me or any other board member.

If you have a story, article, or picture that you would like to share with the other members, or if you would like to get involved in helping our board explore the future of CAHI, let us know. It's your organization, get involved!

Stan Bajerski

Share Your Thoughts and Experiences

As a home inspector, I have seen many unusual things over the years. I am sure all of you have as well. Now that most of us are using photographs in our reports, these unusual items are recorded for posterity. I encourage each and every one of you to consider taking a picture and or an unusual condition that you have come across and write a short article about it. Just a few lines, one page with the picture, and submit it to our newsletter. We really want the membership to become more involved with the organization. Personal stories and encounters are always more interesting to read about.

If there are any products or situations that you would like to have addressed in our newsletter, email me and let me know. I will research and attempt to gather interesting information on the subject for all to read.

CAHI Board of Directors Welcomes Dean Aliberti to the board!

The Board of Directors is happy to announce that CAHI member Dean Aliberti has been voted on as the new Secretary of our organization.

Dean has been a licensed inspector and member of CAHI since 2006. He will be an asset to our organization in his new position as Secretary.

Congratulations and welcome Dean Aliberti!

Ant Inspection

Ants are among the most prevalent pests in households, restaurants, hospitals, offices, warehouses, and virtually all buildings where food and water can be found. While mostly harmless to humans, ants (especially carpenter ants) can cause considerable building damage. Inspectors can expand their knowledge base by being able to identify some of the telltale signs of ant infestation.

Ant Behavior

Ants are social insects that live in colonies divided into three castes: queens, males and workers. Most of the ants you may observe, which are responsible for gathering food, are sterile female workers. Winged males and females will leave the nest to mate, and to find suitable locations for new colonies. After mating, the males die and the impregnated females (queens) shed their wings and lay eggs that will hatch into the legless, grub-like larvae. The queen takes care of these larvae as they develop until they finally become pupae. Within a few weeks, adult worker ants emerge from these pupae and take over the job of tending the young.



into the

Distinguishing Ants from Termites

Winged ants are often mistaken for winged termites, which also leave their nests to mate. These insects can be distinguished from one another by three main characteristics:

- The ant's body is constricted, giving it the appearance of having a thin waist, while the termite's body is not constricted.
- The ant's hind wings are smaller than its front wings, while the termite's front and hind wings are about the same size. Wings might not always be present, however, as both species eventually lose them.

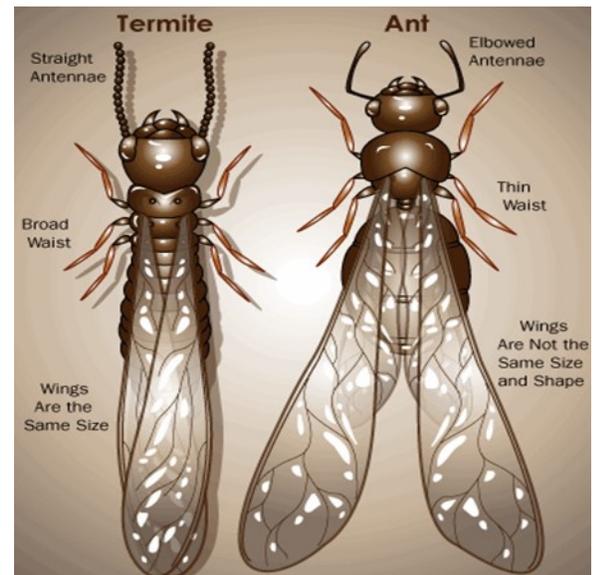
Winged female and worker ants have elbowed antennae, while the termite's antennae are not elbowed.

Termites and ants both construct nests in moist wood, but ant nests are typically smoother and lack mud structures commonly found in termite nests. Also, termites actually subsist on wood, so the structural damage they leave in their wake is generally more severe than that caused by ants, which merely tunnel through wood.

Nests

Carpenter ants nest in both moist and dry wood, but they prefer moist wood. Accordingly, nests are more likely to be found in wood dampened by water leaks, such as wood around bathtubs and sinks, poorly sealed windows and door frames, roof leaks and poorly flashed chimneys. Nests are especially common in moist, hollow spaces, such as the wall void behind a dishwasher and in a hollow deck column. As there will often be no external signs of damage, probing the wood with a screwdriver helps reveal the excavated "galleries." Another technique for locating hidden nests is to tap along baseboards and other wood surfaces with the blunt end of a screwdriver while listening for the hollow sound of tunneled wood. If a nest is nearby, carpenter ants often will respond by making a rustling sound within the nest.

Inspection



The following clues are evidence that a building is host to an ant infestation:

- long trails of ants, perhaps numbering in the hundreds or thousands. Ants assemble in long trails along structural elements, such as wires and pipes, and frequently use them to enter and travel within a structure to their destination. Follow the trail to locate their nest or their entry point, such as an electrical outlet, or gap along a baseboard or around a water pipe;
 - a few straggler ants. These are scouts in search of food and nesting sites. They, too, may be followed back to the nest to betray their family;
 - holes or cracks in walls or foundations, especially where pipes enter the building, and around windows and doors. These can provide entry points for ants and other insects. Kitchens are other food storage and preparation areas are particular problem areas;
 - frass deposits. Frass is the fine sawdust produced after galleries are carved out of the wood. If you suspect that a piece of woodwork hosts a gallery, you can tap on it with a screwdriver tip and see if any dust falls away;
 - a distinctive rustling sound similar to the crinkling of cellophane. Ants are small, but nests are large enough to produce perceptible noise; and
- outside, inspect for nests in mulch and vegetation next to the foundation. Check under potted plants, patio blocks, stepping stones, in piles of rocks, lumber and firewood.

Exclusion Practices

A number of steps can be taken by homeowners to reduce the potential for future ant problems, such as:

- Store food items that attract ants, such as sugar, syrup, honey, and pet food in closed containers. Wash them to remove residues from outer surfaces.
- Rinse out empty soft drink containers or remove them from the building.
- Thoroughly clean up grease and spills.
- Remove garbage from buildings daily and change liners frequently.
- Correct roof and plumbing leaks and other moisture problems that will attract ants.
- Eliminate wood-to-ground contact, such as where landscaping has pushed soil or mulch up against the wood siding of a home.
- Clip back tree limbs and vegetation touching the roof or siding of the house. Limbs and branches serve as bridges between tree limb nests and the structure.
- Seal cracks and openings in the foundation, especially where utility pipes and wires enter from the outside.

Stack firewood away from the foundation, and elevate it off the ground. Never store firewood in the garage or other areas of the home, as firewood is a major ant nesting area.

In summary, ants are complex creatures that create structural defects in buildings. Inspection and exclusion techniques should be practiced.



Barbeque Safety

With barbeque season already here, homeowners should heed the following safety precautions in order to keep their families and property safe.

- **Propane grills** present an enormous fire hazard, as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is aware of more than 500 fires that result annually from their misuse or malfunction. The following precautions are recommended specifically when using propane grills:

- Store propane tanks outdoors and never near the grill or any other heat source. In addition, never store or transport them in your car's trunk.
- Make sure to completely turn off the gas after you have finished, or when you are changing the tank. Even a small gas leak can cause a deadly explosion.
- Check for damage to a tank before refilling it, and only buy propane from reputable suppliers.
- Never use a propane barbecue grill on a terrace, balcony or roof, as this is dangerous and illegal.
- No more than two 20-pound propane tanks are allowed on the property of a one- or two-family home.
- To inspect for a leak, spray a soapy solution over the connections and watch for bubbles. If you see evidence of a leak, reconnect the components and try again. If bubbles persist, replace the leaking parts before using the grill.
- Make sure connections are secure before turning on the gas, especially if the grill hasn't been used in months. The most dangerous time to use a propane grill is at the beginning of the barbeque season.
- Ignite a propane grill with the lid open, not closed. Propane can accumulate beneath a closed lid and explode.
- When finished, turn off the gas first, and then the controls. This way, residual gas in the pipe will be used up.

- **Charcoal grills** pose a serious poisoning threat due to the venting of carbon monoxide (CO). The CPSC estimates that 20 people die annually from accidentally ingesting CO from charcoal grills. These grills can also be a potential fire hazard. Follow these precautions when using charcoal grills:

- Never use a charcoal grill indoors, even if the area is ventilated. CO is colorless and odorless, and you will not know you are in danger until it is too late.

- Use only barbeque starter fluid to start the grill, and don't add the fluid to an open flame. It is possible for the flame to follow the fluid's path back to the container as you're holding it.

- Let the fluid soak into the coals for a minute before igniting them to allow explosive vapors to dissipate.

- Charcoal grills are permitted on terraces and balconies only if there is at least 10 feet of clearance from the building, and a water source immediately nearby, such as a hose (or 4 gallons of water).

- Be careful not to spill any fluid on yourself, and stand back when igniting the grill. Keep the charcoal lighter fluid container at a safe distance from the grill.

- When cleaning the grill, dispose of the ashes in a metal container with a tight lid, and add water. Do not remove the ashes until they have fully cooled.

- Fill the base of the grill with charcoal to a depth of no more than 2 inches.

- **Electric grills** are probably safer than propane and charcoal grills, but safety precautions need to be used with them as well. Follow these tips when using electric grills:

- Do not use lighter fluid or any other combustible materials.



- o When using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the amperage required by the grill. The cord should be unplugged when not in use, and out of a busy foot path to prevent tripping.

As always, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Safety Recommendations for General Grill Use

- Always make sure that the grill is used in a safe place, where kids and pets won't touch or bump into it. Keep in mind that the grill will still be hot after you finish cooking, and anyone coming into contact with it could be burned.
- If you use a grill lighter, make sure you don't leave it lying around where children can reach it. They will quickly learn how to use it.
- Never leave the grill unattended, as this is generally when accidents happen.
- Keep a fire extinguisher or garden hose nearby.
- Ensure that the grill is completely cooled before moving it or placing it back in storage.
- Ensure that the grill is only used on a flat surface that cannot burn, and well away from any shed, trees or shrubs.
- Clean out the grease and other debris in the grill periodically. Be sure to look for rust or other signs of deterioration.
- Don't wear loose clothing that might catch fire while you're cooking.
- Use long-handled barbecue tools and flame-resistant oven mitts.

Keep alcoholic beverages away from the grill; they are flammable! And a sober chef cooks a better steak.

In summary, homeowners should exercise caution when using any kind of grill, as they can harm life and property in numerous ways.

Knob-and-Tube Wiring

Knob-and-tube (K&T) wiring was an early standardized method of electrical wiring in buildings, in common use in North America from about 1880 to the 1940s. The system is considered obsolete and can be a safety hazard, although some of the fear associated with it is undeserved.

Inspectors should always identify and discuss knob-and-tube wiring during their inspections.

Facts About Knob-and-Tube Wiring:

- It is not inherently dangerous. The dangers from this system arise from its age, improper modifications, and situations where building insulation envelops the wires.
- It has no ground wire and thus cannot service any three-pronged appliances.
- While it is considered obsolete, there is no code that requires its complete removal.
- It is treated differently in different jurisdictions. In some areas, it must be removed at all accessible locations, while others merely require that it not be installed in new construction.
- It is not permitted in any new construction.

How Knob-and-Tube Wiring Works:

K&T wiring consists of insulated copper conductors passing through lumber framing drill-holes via protective porcelain insulating tubes. They are supported along their length by nailed-down porcelain knobs. Where wires enter a wiring device, such as a lamp or switch, or were pulled into a wall, they are protected by flexible cloth or rubber insulation called "loom."

Advantages of Knob-and-Tube Wiring:

- K&T wiring has a higher ampacity than wiring systems of the same gauge. The reason for this is that the hot and neutral wires are separated from one another, usually by 4 to 6 inches, which allows the wires to readily dissipate heat into free air.
- K&T wires are less likely than Romex cables to be punctured by nails because K&T wires are held away from the framing.
- The porcelain components have an almost unlimited lifespan.
- The original installation of knob-and-tube wiring is often superior to that of modern Romex wiring. K&T wiring installation requires more skill to install than Romex and, for this reason, unskilled people rarely ever installed it.

Problems Associated with K&T Wiring:

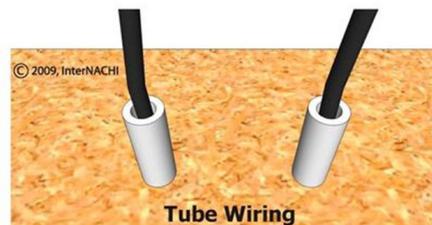
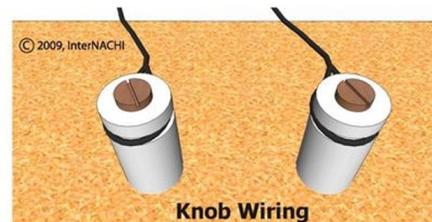
- Unsafe modifications are far more common with K&T wiring than they are with Romex and other modern wiring systems. Part of the reason for this is that K&T is so old that more opportunity has existed for improper modifications.
- The insulation that envelops the wiring is a fire hazard.
- It tends to stretch and sag over time.
- It lacks a grounding conductor. Grounding conductors reduce the chance of electrical fire and damage to sensitive equipment.
- In older systems, wiring is insulated with varnish and fiber materials that are susceptible to deterioration.

Compared with modern wiring insulation, K&T wiring is less resistant to damage. K&T wiring insulated with cambric and asbestos is not rated for moisture exposure. Older systems contained insulation with additives that may oxidize copper wire. Bending the wires may cause insulation to crack and peel away.

K&T wiring is often spliced with modern wiring incorrectly by amateurs. This is perhaps due to the ease by which K&T wiring is accessed.

Building Insulation:

Knob and Tube Wiring



K&T wiring is designed to dissipate heat into free air, and insulation will disturb this process. Insulation around K&T wires will cause heat to build up, and this creates a fire hazard. The 2008 National Electrical Code (NEC) requires that this wiring system not be covered by insulation. Specifically, it states that this wiring system should not be in...

hollow spaces of walls, ceilings and attics where such spaces are insulated by loose, rolled or foamed-in-place insulating material that envelops the conductors.

Local jurisdictions may or may not adopt the NEC's requirement. The California Electrical Code, for instance, allows insulation to be in contact with knob-and-tube wiring, provided that certain conditions are met, such as, but not limited to, the following:

- A licensed electrical contractor must certify that the system is safe.
- The certification must be filed with the local building department.
- Accessible areas where insulation covers the wiring must be posted with a warning sign. In some areas, this sign must be in Spanish and English.
- The insulation must be non-combustible and non-conductive.
- Normal requirements for insulation must be met.

Modifications:

When K&T wiring was first introduced, common household electrical appliances were limited to little more than toasters, tea kettles, coffee percolators and clothes irons. The electrical requirements of mid- to late-20th century homes

could not have been foreseen during the late 18th century, a time during which electricity, to many, was seen as a passing fad. Existing K&T systems are notorious for modifications made in an attempt to match the increasing amperage loads required by televisions, refrigerators, and a plethora of other electric appliances. Many of these attempts were made by insufficiently trained handymen, rather than experienced electricians, whose work made the wiring system vulnerable to overloading.

- Many homeowners adapted to the inadequate amperage of K&T wiring by installing fuses with resistances that were too high for the wiring. The result of this modification is that the fuses would not blow as often and the wiring would suffer heat damage due to excessive amperage loads.
- It is not uncommon for inspectors to find connections wrapped with masking tape or Scotch tape instead of electrical tape.

K&T Wiring and Insurance:

Many insurance companies refuse to insure houses that have knob-and-tube wiring due to the risk of fire. Exceptions are sometimes made for houses where an electrical contractor has deemed the system to be safe.

Advice for those with K&T wiring:

- Have the system evaluated by a qualified electrician. Only an expert can confirm that the system was installed and modified correctly.
- Do not run an excessive amount of appliances in the home, as this can cause a fire.
- Where the wiring is brittle or cracked, it should be replaced. Proper maintenance is crucial.
- K&T wiring should not be used in kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms or outdoors. Wiring must be grounded in order to be used safely in these locations.
- Rewiring a house can take weeks and cost thousands of dollars, but unsafe wiring can cause fires, complicate estate transactions, and make insurers skittish.
- Homeowners should carefully consider their options before deciding whether to rewire their house.
- The homeowner or an electrician should carefully remove any insulation that is found surrounding K&T wires.

Prospective home buyers should get an estimate of the cost of replacing K&T wiring. They can use this amount to negotiate a cheaper price for the house.

In summary, knob-and-tube wiring is likely to be a safety hazard due to improper modifications and the addition of building insulation. Inspectors need to be wary of this old system and be prepared to inform their clients about its potential dangers.



Pest Birds

Birds are graceful creatures and essential to our eco-system, but when they enter human living and working spaces, they can become pests. Commercial properties, in particular, are vulnerable to the problems associated with pest birds, their nests and their droppings.

Facts and Figures

- An apprentice elevator mechanic obtained a \$2.7 million settlement from a property owner after bird droppings caused him to slip and fall down an elevator shaft.
- Bird droppings contain uric acid, which, at a pH of 3 to 4.5, can eat through most building materials.
- Like many other animals, birds are drawn to the scent of their own waste. Thoroughly cleaning and deodorizing surfaces eliminates this scent trail and discourages pest birds from following the scent back to their old roosts.

Pest birds cause tens of millions of dollars of damage every year to machinery, automobiles, roofs and ventilation systems.



Problems Caused by Pest Birds to Commercial Properties

- noise: Many species of birds produce an incessant and irritating noise when they gather in sizeable numbers. This noise can be a nuisance to building occupants and workers, and deter customers from returning to a business.
- nests: Nests can damage buildings in the following ways:
 - o roof damage: Starling, pigeon and sparrow nests are often built in rain gutters, drains and the underside of roof corners. Warehouses, in particular, may experience great damage, even collapsed roofs, when drainage systems are blocked and standing water is forced to rise. A collapsed roof that results in death or serious physical damage could put a company out of business.
 - o blocked ventilation systems: Bird nests built in chimneys and ventilation systems can not only spread diseases through the system, but they can actually block airflow to the building. People can be killed by carbon monoxide poisoning when bird nests block the exhaust system.
 - o fires: Nests are usually flammable due to their construction of twigs, straw and dried droppings. Nests constructed in electric signs and machinery pose a severe fire risk.
- droppings: Droppings account for some of the most visible and serious problems associated with pest birds, some of which are listed below:
 - disease: Researchers have found more than 60 transmittable bird-borne diseases and dangerous parasitic organisms that can be dangerous and even fatal to humans. Humans can inhale micro-organisms contained in dried-out bird droppings when they are disturbed, leading to lung diseases such as histoplasmosis. Toxoplasmosis and query fever can develop when humans ingest foods that have come into contact with bird-related bacteria. Also, property-destroying and disease-laden insects and mites are found on birds, their droppings and nesting materials.
 - property: Left undisturbed, bird waste can damage almost any building material. Wood, stone, steel and iron can all be damaged by bird droppings, which have a pH level similar to vinegar. If allowed to accumulate, droppings can clog gutters, discolor paint, corrode I-beams, ruin cloth awnings, and short out electrical equipment. Droppings commonly eat into and destroy wood, paper and cardboard packaging of products stored outdoors on pallets.

roofs: Bird droppings can eat away at many substrates, especially tar-based roofing materials. Droppings that are allowed to accumulate on roofs will eat into the material and eventually cause leaks. The life expectancy of a warehouse roof can be cut in half by a light, but continuous, layer of bird droppings.

machinery: Bird droppings can do heavy damage to air-conditioning equipment and industrial machinery. Also, workers are put at risk any time they work on or around machinery contaminated by bird droppings.

automobile finishes: Most bird droppings will fade paint finishes by eating into the protective coating and the paint itself. The longer the droppings are allowed to sit on the paint, the more damage they will do. Customers whose cars are defaced by bird droppings are less likely to return to that place of business!



live birds: Birds that enter building interiors can wreak havoc on commercial operations. Large, open areas, such as the insides of warehouses, airplane hangars, malls, factories and convention centers are often home to pest birds. Bird droppings can ruin plastics when they are being molded, destroy any number of chemicals and liquids that are being manufactured, ruin paint jobs on aircraft, and contaminate food that is being made or packaged. Droppings also spoil finished products in loading bays and storage areas. And, of course, droppings can rain down on the heads of customers and employees who are in the building. This latter issue can be of particular severity at indoor concerts, sporting events and in malls.

company image: Droppings on or around a building convey to the public that the building is not properly maintained. Prospective customers may wonder how clean a restaurant's kitchen could be if bird droppings are dripping down the side of the building.

slips and falls: Bird droppings, which are slippery when fresh, may cause pedestrians, customers and/or employees to slip at such places as building entrances and fire escapes. Commercial property owners who fail to prevent bird infestation may be prone to huge legal liabilities.

Although most *Standards of Practice for Inspecting* do not require inspectors to determine the presence of birds, they still may be knowledgeable about bird infestation and deterrence. Consult with a pest control inspector during your next scheduled inspection to find out the extent of the problem and possible corrective measures.

Bird Deterrence Methods

Unlike homes and boats, commercial buildings can suffer damage from pest birds on a grand scale. The only viable solution is bird-proofing, which involves denying the birds access to nesting and roosting areas of a structure. This can be accomplished with products that make it uncomfortable for birds to roost in a particular area, or with products that make it physically impossible for birds to access the structure. The following options are available to commercial property owners who wish to be free of pest birds:

- "porcupine wire" or "bird spikes": This simple, effective, and inexpensive bird-control method dates back to 1950, when newly invented porcupine-wire strips were installed on the structures of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's farm near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. They are available in species-specific sizes.
- pin and wire systems: Birds will not land on these tight strands of wire. Installation of this system can be very labor-intensive and should only be used for repelling large birds. These systems work best when covering very narrow surfaces, such as railings, along balconies, and where there is moderate human activity. Some systems can now transmit a low-voltage current through the wires to help repel birds.
- scare-away devices: Of the various scare-away devices available, balloons may be the most effective because they move around with the wind. It may be helpful to frequently change balloon position and color to help prevent birds

from becoming accustomed to them.

- sticky paste and liquid repellents: These types of products are non-drying, non-toxic, sticky substances that are spread onto a surface. The compound tends to irritate birds' feet so that they leave the protected area.
- safe chemical bird repellents: Use safe chemical bird repellents that are regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). When a bird is exposed to a chemical bird repellent, they temporarily experience pain. The birds suffer no permanent harm, but they will associate the pain stimulus with the site and learn that the area is not desirable.

bird netting: Netting is a good choice for access prevention. If you have an open warehouse, a building, or an overhang where birds get up into the rafters and beams, bird netting is an effective, economical choice. Netting should be strong and lightweight, with 3/4-inch square openings or smaller. Larger openings may not prevent sparrows and other small birds from passing through.

Note: Before purchasing a bird-control system, identify the types and number of birds causing the problem. Make note of the areas where birds are landing and roosting. If the birds are not present at the time of inspection, look for nests and droppings on the building, sidewalks, awnings and signs. Also, look for and eliminate any nearby water or food sources.

In summary, pest birds can damage property and endanger human health. Commercial property owners should discuss with an inspector if they suspect they have a problem with pest birds.



Here are some freebies that inspectors should NEVER give out.

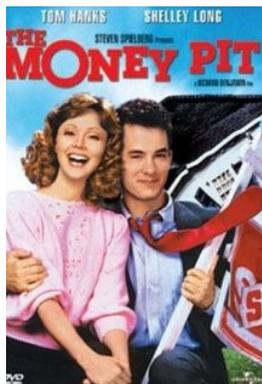
Put yourself in your client's shoes for a moment. How would you feel handing over payment for your home inspection only to be handed back one of these items by a smiling inspector?



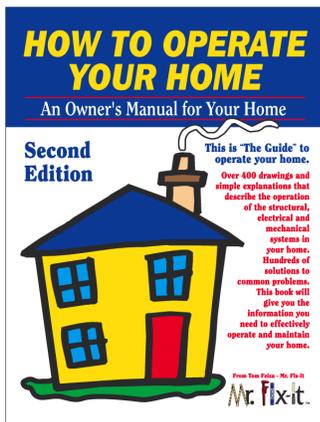
The Idiot's Pocket Guide to Home Inspections



A can of STOP LEAK leak sealant



The Money Pit movie on DVD



child's coloring book

A repair manual from Mr. Fix-It with illustrations that look like like they belong in a



A roll of duct tape

Yes, you have a great sense of humor. Yes, you're a generous home inspector who cares about his clients. No, your clients will not appreciate those fine qualities when their greatest concern is whether their home is in good condition and you hand them a roll of duct tape, which plants the vague and uncomfortable notion that maybe they should start looking for plumbing leaks that you haven't reported.

Each of these items has some sort of negative connotation, and the effect is that they can raise doubts and faint alarms--and a couple are downright insulting. So, think carefully before you invest in freebies for your clients. Not all of them are good ideas.*

Warm weather brings back insects. Mosquitoes are one of the more aggravating and might be discussed during an inspection. This is the latest write up from our CT Department of Public Health. The DPH web site has all kinds of information on health related issues many of which impact homes.

Mosquitos Frequently Asked Questions

How many species of mosquitoes are there?

There are currently 49 species identified in Connecticut, 200 in North America and over 2500 species worldwide.

Do all mosquitoes bite humans?

No. Of the 49 species in Connecticut, less than half are considered pest species to humans and livestock.

Why do mosquitoes bite humans?

Mosquitoes do not actually "bite" humans; they "feed" on them. Female mosquitoes require protein to produce their eggs and obtain this protein from the blood of humans and other animals.

Do male and female mosquitoes both feed on humans?

No. Since male mosquitoes do not lay eggs, they do not require protein. Only the female mosquito requires a source of protein to produce her eggs.

Where do mosquitoes breed?

A mosquito's lifecycle has four stages – egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Mosquitoes need water to breed since all mosquitoes spend their larval and pupal stages in water. Therefore, mosquitoes can always be found around water. This is why it is important to prevent stagnant water from standing around your home and apply a larvicide to areas where stagnant water cannot be removed.

How long do mosquitoes live?

Most adult mosquitoes wind up as food for birds, dragonflies, or spiders. Others succumb to the effects of wind, rain, and drought. Those that don't may persist for as long as 2-3 months and adults that hibernate can live as long 6-8 months.

Where do mosquitoes go during the winter?

Mosquitoes are cold-blooded creatures and do not generally bite in temperatures below 50F. In Connecticut, some adult mosquitoes become inactive with the onset of cold weather and enter into hibernation before the first frost. Other mosquitoes die in the fall but have winter-hardy eggs, which hibernate as embryos.

How do mosquitoes spread disease?

Only in the last century has it been known that mosquitoes are capable of spreading disease. The diseases are often viruses that are picked up by the mosquito when it feeds on an infected host. When the mosquito then feeds on another host, it can then spread the virus.

What type of diseases can mosquitoes carry?

Mosquitoes are known to have carried diseases such as malaria, yellow fever, dog heartworm, and viral encephalitis. Mosquitoes do not transmit AIDS.

How can mosquitoes be controlled?

Mosquitoes around the home can be reduced significantly by minimizing the amount of standing water available for mosquito breeding. Residents are urged to reduce standing water around the home in a variety of ways. Source reduction activities include:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or similar water-holding containers that have accumulated on your property.

Empty standing water from used or [discarded tires](#) (*pdf*) that may have accumulated on your property (e.g. tire

swings).

- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left out of doors.
- Clean clogged roof gutters on an annual basis, particularly if the leaves from surrounding trees have a tendency to plug up the drains.
- Turn over plastic wading pools when not in use.
- Turn over wheelbarrows and do not allow water to stagnate in birdbaths.
- Change water in birdbaths and wading pools on a weekly basis.
- Aerate ornamental pools or stock them with fish.

Clean and chlorinate swimming pools that are not being used. Be aware that mosquitoes may even breed in the water that collects on swimming pool covers.

Why are mosquitoes able to survive pesticide spraying?

Pesticides such as resmethrin are designed to kill adult mosquitoes within 5-30 minutes of contact. Contact is more reliably achieved after sunset and overnight when most mosquitoes are airborne. When contact is made, insecticides such as resmethrin are approximately 90% effective so some mosquitoes do survive spraying. It is not designed to kill mosquito larvae so non-adult mosquitoes will not be affected and new hatches of adults may need to be addressed.

How can I protect myself from mosquito-borne diseases?

The best way is to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. This can be accomplished using personal protection while outdoors when mosquitoes are present. Examples of such protective measures are:

- Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when outdoors for long periods of time, or when mosquitoes are most active.
- Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies when outdoors.

Consider the use of mosquito repellent, according to directions, when it is necessary to be outdoors.

Where can I go for more information?

DEEP's Mosquito Management Program at 860-642-7630.

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