

## WILL YOUR HOME STAY MOISTURE FREE?

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As we start to look around, we are seeing the beauty of springtime. The trees are budding and producing leaves, the flowers are blooming, and the grass is green. Yes, once again those April showers have brought us May flowers. With that rain though, can also come the dreaded MOLD that everyone fears seeing. So what can we do to prevent such a nightmare from happening? Well to put it quite simply, keep our homes dry.

Spring cleaning also means its time to evaluate your building envelope, or the exterior of your home. We need to be looking at the issues that will allow moisture to intrude into our homes. Some of these items are common sense things that sometimes get overlooked.

Let's start from the top of your home and work our way down. The roof is a very crucial part of the building envelope, but not generally an item that we see as being a problem, unless it has been awhile since we had a new one. Pipes, plumbing stacks, and chimneys that exit through the roof can be routes of moisture intrusion if not well maintained. We need to make sure that the sealant hasn't degraded around these items and allowed gaps to form. Having a roofer inspect your roof is not a bad idea if you are not sure what things should look like up there.

The next item that we need to pay close attention to is the guttering system. The guttering system is generally an item that when it fails, will undoubtedly lead to moisture intrusion. Keeping them clean is job number one, but we also need to make sure that they are securely attached and all parts are installed. Make sure that you have proper lengths of downspout extensions (2-3ft) and that they are always connected. Keep in mind that all the moisture that hits your roof runs through and out this system.

Our next item in our building envelope would be our siding. Some of us are fortunate and have low maintenance types of siding like vinyl and brick, but they are still prone to failure. We need to look for cracks and compromises, and where evident get them fixed. For the rest of us, we might have siding that may have to be painted occasionally. Unpainted areas of siding are typically a good place to find rot, and a perfect access for moisture to impact the interior. Inspect around your windows for degrading caulking and areas of rot as well.

The next item to look at would be our foundation. First, how is the grade around your home? We need to maintain a grade around our foundation that will allow for moisture to flow away from the home. Did your foundation or the soil around it experience settling in the winter months? You may need to add some soil to build the grade back up

to be acceptable and allow for proper moisture flow. Windows in the foundation walls will generally have window wells. We need to keep the wells cleaned out and free of organic debris and installing a window well cover is advisable. Also, the wells should be above the grade a couple of inches to ensure that moisture doesn't flow into them.

The last things that we should be aware of are cracks and compromises in our concrete sidewalks, patios, and driveways. Any compromise between our foundation and concrete as well as the cracks in the concrete should be sealed with a polyurethane grade sealant like NP1. This will help to deflect the moisture from loading our foundations and seeping inside.

With all these thoughts in mind, I want to add one more. It is highly recommended that you run a dehumidifier in your home to help eliminate excess moisture vapor. We have a fairly high relative humidity in the Spring and Summer months and we should maintain that humidity to be below 50% inside our homes to inhibit biological growth from occurring.