



California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA) Press / Media Information
Latest Press Release: CREIA Offers Advice When Flooding Disasters Occur

Courtesy of the California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA)

February 2005 (Palm Springs, Calif) — The recent heavy rains and winter weather in California, as well as other natural disasters around the globe, has prompted the California Real Estate Inspection Association (CREIA) to advise homeowners that there are precautions that can be taken to better ensure your family and home's protection against water intrusion. Although no one can prevent natural disasters from occurring, there are many things that can be done to make the impact less devastating for one's home and family.

Priority should always focus on your family's safety. Make sure you have a safety plan which includes differing routes of evacuation for the home's inhabitants. Practice the plan with all family members. Make sure to turn off the gas, water and electricity before you evacuate. And don't forget the neighbors — elderly, disabled and small children may need help. Remember also to have an emergency supply kit with first aid and other basic items handy.

There are also precautions that you can do to protect your home. The recent heavy rains and severe winter weather in California have caused moisture problems for many homeowners — some of which could have been avoided. The most common means of moisture intrusion noted by home inspectors in California are through the following avenues: gaining entry below the structure; worn roof coverings; deteriorated roof vent flashing serving both plumbing fixtures and mechanical equipment; improperly installed or worn chimney flashing; and doors and windows that have not been properly weather sealed. Plumbing and drainage problems can escalate to health issues as molds can grow on virtually any substance when moisture is present.

Below is a simple list of maintenance tasks for the homeowner to perform to help prevent moisture infiltration both into and below their homes:

- Clean all rain gutters, including downspouts, and make sure all gutter joints are properly sealed.
- Insure that rain gutter downspouts are directed away from the perimeter foundation. This may take adding some corrugated plastic extension piping you can purchase at your local home store.
- Check to see there are no low areas around the home's perimeter foundation where water can collect after a rainstorm. Standing water will eventually work its way beneath the home and can lead to building settlement and foundation support failure.
- Carefully check all of your exterior doors and windows and adjacent trim to see if they need any application of exterior type epoxy or sealants.
- Immediately after the first heavy rain, check under your house to confirm that the ground is reasonably dry.
- If you think the surface grade around the perimeter foundation is a source for concern and more than you can fix with a garden shovel, consult a state licensed drainage contractor for their recommendations — they will provide a cost estimate for corrective work which may include the installation of an underground drainage system.

Make sure your home's roof, grade-level, and underground drainage systems are designed to redirect water flow away from the perimeter foundation. Properly installed drainage systems help prevent flooding, soils erosion, excessive moisture conditions, foundation settlement, and moisture infiltration into below grade rooms and storage areas.

The migration of moisture against either a home's perimeter concrete foundation stem wall or beneath a concrete slab type foundation can be costly for homeowners because of the potential damage possible to a home's support systems, as well as to personal contents and mechanical systems, along with the possible encouragement of mold and pest infestation.

If any flooding has recently occurred, the foundations, subfloor framing, and other building components should be carefully examined for possible moisture-related damage. To ensure that a home's drainage system is adequate in design and effective during wet weather, make sure it is evaluated by a qualified and experienced inspector.

CREIA requires its members to successfully pass a comprehensive written examination of property systems, have performed at least 50 fee-based inspections and complete 30 hours of continuing education each year. Members can accumulate credits through various sources of education including monthly chapter meetings, conferences, and other approved activities. CREIA keeps records to ensure that members are complying with the requirements. Educational topics cover a variety of technical subjects including updates and advances affecting the profession of real estate inspection. CREIA is dedicated to consumer protection and education.