



HANKEY & BROWN

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Certified Members of the American Society of Home Inspectors®
E-mail: ghankey@hankeyandbrown.com 2005 Angie's List® Super Service Award winner

Environmental Health Advisory

CARBON MONOXIDE (CO)

1. Detectors: Even though we test combustion equipment during the inspection, homes with furnaces, water heaters, gas ovens, tobacco smokers, candles, fireplaces, woodstoves, or attached garages need a carbon monoxide detector. A CO detector isn't a smoke alarm. You need both. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says that EVERY HOME should have one or more Carbon Monoxide Alarms installed. Detectors available in retail stores do NOT respond to low levels and usually carry a label statement similar to the following:

"Pregnant women, infants, children, senior citizens, persons with heart or respiratory problems and smokers may experience symptoms at lower levels of exposure than noted. Individuals with medical problems may consider using warning devices which provide audible and visual signals for carbon monoxide concentrations under 30 ppm." Therefore, we strongly recommend you purchase a low level detector produced by CO Experts. We offer them at \$130 (+\$5.00 S. & H. if purchased later). For more info see <http://www.coexperts.com>

2. Gas Ovens: These appliances often make high levels of carbon monoxide during the pre-heat. Gas ovens should be ventilated to the outdoors. A recirculating type range hood is NOT adequate ventilation for this type oven. NEVER use a gas oven for space heating. If you line the oven with aluminum foil, cut and fit the foil so that the bottom plate air slots remain open.

3. Attached Garages: Auto exhaust fumes can easily enter the house. Limit the flow of carbon monoxide from the car to the house by backing out *immediately* after starting the car. NEVER warm up the car in the garage, even with the door open.

RADON: A US Surgeon General's Health Advisory says that ALL US homes should be tested for radon. (A soil gas, and risk factor for lung cancer, especially for smokers.) We offer two types of radon screening tests: electronic monitor (2-3 day test) or long term alpha track. We STRONGLY urge you to test for radon. See "Home Buyer's & Seller's Guide to Radon" from the US EPA on our Home Buyers Guide CD or American Lung Assoc. at 651 227-8014 or at <http://www.epa.gov/iedweb00/radon/pubs/hmbyguid.html>.

LEAD PAINT: Many homes built before 1978 have lead based paint. Lead in paint chips and dust can pose serious health hazards if not taken care of properly. Federal law requires that individuals receive information before renting, buying, or renovating pre-1978 housing. Sellers must disclose known information on lead-based paint hazards before selling a house. Sales contracts must include a federal form about lead-based paint. Buyers have up to 10 days to check for lead hazards. For information call the National Lead Information Clearinghouse at 1-800 424 LEAD. The US EPA has published "Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home", or call the Minn. Department of Health Lead Program at 651 215 0890. See articles on our Home Buyers Guide CD.

INDOOR MOLDS: A great source of information on mold is the Minn. Dept. of Health, 651 215 5800, or web page. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/aialr/iair/moldslide/moldtext.html>. (Included on our Home Buyers Guide CD) Indoor molds grow on damp organic surfaces. You will know if molds are present since you can see and smell them. Get rid of wet moldy materials, and clean up with bleach & water. Wear rubber gloves, goggles, & a face (dust) mask during mold cleanup. Eliminate the source of excessive dampness. The key to mold prevention and correction is moisture control.

OTHER ISSUES: Risks from asbestos, formaldehyde, second-hand tobacco smoke exposure are best evaluated by specialists. We may be able to provide a preliminary identification of these pollutants. We can provide referrals to specialists when appropriate. More information some of these topics is presented on our Home Buyers Guide CD.