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## SUMP PUMP FAILURES...

### how to reduce the risk of a flooded basement!

Finally, a reliable sump pump back-up! And it doesn't require electricity because it operates off of your city municipal water supply. Most homeowners don't give their electric sump pump much thought. It's rarely noticed when it starts up and pumps water from below the house slab from the "jug" or pit in the basement floor to the outside



A typical water operated sump back-up that doesn't require electricity to run.

of the house. A sump pump is one of the most important operating systems in the house and it deserves a lot more attention than most of us give it. Its sole purpose is to protect your home from basement flooding. Sump pump failure can be devastating. Any water entering into a house can cause structural damage and is the primary source of mold growth. The cost of personal property losses from flooding has skyrocketed as we convert basements into living areas. Unfortunately electric sump pumps don't operate when there's a power outage...no electricity, no pumping.

They're useless at the time when we're probably dealing with the worst of weather conditions and need the pump to work the most. **see WATER POWERED page 3**

## ENERGY EFFICIENCIES: back to the basics.

### HVAC: Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning system basics.

Some issues seem to come up more often than others soon after buyers go to closing and move into their recently built homes. Because of increasing energy costs the number one question owners have had recently is about the cost of operating a home's HVAC (Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning) system. Operating your HVAC is one of the highest re-occurring monthly costs associated with owning a house.

It's a variable expense that's continuing upward with no relief in sight. Even a properly installed HVAC system will simply take more money to operate for it maintain a comfortable home than it did in the past.

Over the last decade the federal government has implemented stringent guidelines in the residential home building industry designed to reduce

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A disconnected return duct in the attic pulling unconditioned air and insulation into the furnace.

## **CONTRACTORS AND HOMEOWNERS: Different perspectives and views.**

**Contractors see their role in the job as managing the different phases of work.** His or her view is focused on how to bring together all of the parts, pieces and people and finish the work to your satisfaction. They're concerned about the systems and components that need to be installed, replaced or repaired. Homeowners, on the other hand, are concerned about the appearance and final outcome of the project. Does everything look good and does it work?

For the contractor, the colors and finish materials are incidental to the project

plan and his general performance. White paint goes on just as easily as beige. As long as everything looks good to the homeowner and works, he's done his job. Understanding this difference in views can go a long way in helping you communicate better with your contractor.

When homeowners meet a contractor they develop a picture of what he or she may be like and what the comfort level is. Contractors do the same analysis when they meet with homeowners. The same way the a contractors actions might raise a red flag for

you, your actions might do the same for him or her. If a contractor feels that you might be difficult to work with he may leave and not give you the courtesy of calling back.

Both parties must have a good comfort level and trust in each other. A well written contract is good for both the homeowner and the contractor. Unfortunately, no contract is a substitute for that feeling you get about how well you and a contractor will work together once it's signed.

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## Now there's “**H.O.A.P**”

With a membership in the **Home Owners Assistance Program!**

“HOAP” is the Home Owners Assistance Program membership exclusively for home owners. As a HOAP member we provide you with a professional view of your individual home... information and facts you can't get anywhere else! We're there when you need assistance and information with a wide range of services and support most home owners need and search for on a regular basis and **CAN'T FIND IN ONE PLACE UNTIL NOW!**

### WHAT WE DO IS:

- SCHEDULE A VISIT TO YOUR HOME AND PERFORM AN “AUDIT & CHECK UP” OF IT'S GENERAL CONDITION.
- DISCUSS WHAT WE FIND, ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS AND EXPLAIN HOW “THINGS” WORK.
- PROVIDE MONEY SAVING TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HOME AND IT'S VALUE.
- PREPARE AND PROVIDE YOU WITH A FOLLOW-UP REPORT OF OUR FINDINGS.

### AS A MEMBER YOU'LL HAVE:

- A “GO TO PLACE” FOR ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE WHEN PROBLEMS COME UP WITH YOUR HOUSE.
- ONE ON ONE PERSONAL HELP WHEN PLANNING SMALL, MEDIUM AND LARGE PROJECTS.
- GUIDANCE ON “DO-IT-YOURSELF” REPAIRS AND PROJECTS.
- ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR YOUR HOME.
- BENEFITS AND DISCOUNTS FOR PARTICIPATING BUSINESS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS.

**For more information give us a call at: (540) 898-1199**

**Or email at: [HOAP@TOMYWEBSITE.COM](mailto:HOAP@TOMYWEBSITE.COM)**

### **MARK YOUR CALENDER!**

**SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY BUILDING DEPARTMENT OPENS DOOR WITH BUILDER'S ROUNDTABLE**

The builder's roundtable is an informal gathering of builders and contractors to discuss code issues and related topics. The program is designed for residential builders and contractors , but open to all. Meetings will be held the first Tuesday of every month in the main conference room of the Building Safety Dept., 10304 Spotsylvania Ave., 4th floor.

Doors open at 11:30 for a brown bag lunch (you eat what you bring). Informal discussions begin at 12:00 (noon) and will end promptly at 1:00 pm. Participants are encouraged to suggest topics for future roundtables.

For more information contact Dave Ansell, Deputy Building Official at: (540) 507-7230 or email at: [dansell@spotsylvania.va.us](mailto:dansell@spotsylvania.va.us)

**WATER POWERED** from page 1

They're also notorious for failing to operate and can stop working without warning.

A number of homeowners have battery back-up pumps installed in case their primary pump fails. Battery operated pumps were designed to work in an emergency for brief periods during interruptions in electrical service.

They're powered by a 12 volt marine battery and a 120 volt “trickle” charger that plugs into your wall outlet. They only operate efficiently with a fully charged battery. Within a few hours

they too are virtually useless without electricity and recharging.

The water activated pump is a creative and reliable back-up to a primary sump pump that requires no electricity. A pump that operates exclusively from the municipal water supply in your house.

Here's how it works. A float located in the sump pump jug lifts up if water rises above the primary pump during a power outage or primary pump failure. It activates a valve in the unit sending a powerful stream of city water through

an ejector. Acting like a giant straw, it draws water up from the pit and discharges it outdoors. As water is removed from the pit, the float returns to it's lowest level and pumping stops.

Unlike the primary and battery back-ups the water powered pump operates whenever it's needed. To take over if the primary system loses power or can't handle the volume of water. Day or night, home or away it's ready to run and keep your basement dry.

**HOME REPAIRS: What to do, where to start... and where to get help!**

Home, that special place where we go after a long day to relax and recharge. Our refuge where we escape the pressures of the world outside. And that's how it should be.

Unfortunately, too many of us take our home for granted. We fail to understand that every house is dynamic. It's much more than an assembly of materials: it's got a life of it's own!

Think about it. It's framing is the skeleton that holds everything together. Electrical wiring works like our nervous system carrying signals from one place to another. Plumbing waste lines are like a digestive system; things go in one end and out another. Water supply pipes form the circulatory system as water courses through to different parts of the house. A furnace breathes as it moves conditioned air from one place to another not unlike your respiratory system. The roof and siding are the house skin protecting it from the elements. Thinking of your house as a living thing should help in understanding and demystify the basics of how it works.

Unfortunately, we don't pay as much attention to our house as we should. We have an obligation to know some basics and what's going in and around

that special place we call home. Why, because the more we understand it's condition and workings the better we're prepared to protect ourselves and our family's lives; their safety, health and well being. And to keep operating costs to a minimum.

We tend to wait for conditions to deteriorate or problems to manifest themselves before taking action. It's obvious when exterior surfaces need painting, gutters are pulling loose or there's a leaky faucet. All conditions we know need repair. And still, we might be inclined to wait.

One reason we put off repairs may be we're out of our league on what to do. At the least, it can be confusing sorting out what you might find. Then, deciding what to do and how to tackle a repair can get complicating. Even simple repairs require some tools, materials and skills. And the work might take more time and energy than you've got.

So why not hire a company to do an examination or “audit” of your house? Professionals with the experience and trained to identify potential problems. After completing the “examination ” they'll:

- Review what they've found.
- Help prioritize your list.

- Suggest repair options.
- Help formulate a “plan”.

Then, it's up to you to decide what to do. You may choose to :

- Do nothing and simply wait.
- Do some or all of the repairs and maintenance yourself.
- Find a trade or contractor to do the work.

Whatever your decision, you'll have a solid starting point and better understanding of how to protect your families safety, health and well being. And there are real cost saving by staying ahead of the repair curve. Differed maintenance and repair costs can quickly spiral out of control, and none of us need that!

So, if you don't know what you're looking for, can't figure out what to do, haven't got the time and tools or, just need that extra help, contact us. We'll be there for you. Ready, willing and able to assist in taking that important first step.

For more information on everything about your home. Contact us at:

**(540) 898—1199**

or  
**INFO@HOMEPROFILED.COM**

**SIMPLE “PROJECT RULES” TO FOLLOW: Fit, form and function!**

Many building and remodeling techniques may have evolved and become simplified over the last few decades but the basic principles remain largely unchanged. Most jobs are easier today than they were only a few years ago. Its becoming more a matter of “assembly and installation ” and less “building from scratch”. The need to measure and cut materials has been reduced. Unlike the old days, remodelers and installers are provided with a wealth of resources and information. Manufacturers always include detailed drawings, specifications, layouts, etc. that are shipped with their products. Whenever a problem or question rises

they encourage the installer to contact them for answers and guidance. They want their products to look and work the way it was designed. The guidelines are simple:

- Fit: Was their product installed in a place or way that it wasn't designed for?
- Form: Was it modified with changes made to it's basic form?
- Function: Is the product doing the job and, will it stand up to time.

Product manufacturers have established requirements and specific guidelines that need to be followed . With-

out proper storage, handling and installation, products may not look or perform the way they were intended. Failing to follow instructions could also void the manufacturer's warranty. And worse, result in failure of the product.

No one job is exactly the same as any other. For seasoned trades professionals there's probably little or nothing mysterious about your project. Professionals should have enough experience to apply what they've learned and easily work through your project with few problems. If they have a problem there's always somewhere to go get help!

**BASICS from page 1**

energy consumption. In theory, following these new regulations when installing a new HVAC should reduce energy consumption and operating costs. Unfortunately, the program isn't working the way it was intended too because an important part of the formula has been completely ignored. Little, or nothing, is being done to insure that your new energy efficient HVAC system has



Open gaps in an attic supply duct.

been properly installed by the builders of new homes. Minimum building codes require that the "joints of duct systems shall be made substantially airtight by means of tapes, mastics, gaskets or other approved closure systems." Why? Because your system can only operate efficiently if it's installed as a "closed loop"! In short, the inside air in your house is conditioned (heated in winter by the burners, or cooled in summer by the air conditioning coils) in the unit as a result of continuous air flow through the house interior. This air flow forms a loop that must be completely sealed and not compromised at any point. If the HVAC system is installed with gaps or openings in either the supply and return ducts, or the unit cabinet, the result will be inefficient operation and significantly higher gas or electric utility

bills.

Many of the new homes I've inspected have compromised air flow loops as a result of improper installation. The HVAC installers simply failed to properly seal the ducts and cabinet to make certain they're air tight; and will stay that way. A high percentage of new homes inspected within the first two years of completion have supply and return duct joints that have separated and literally falling apart. There's nothing more inefficient then a poorly installed, damaged, or disconnected return or supply duct running through your attic or basement. No other factor increases operating costs then a return duct pulling hot or cold unconditioned (unfiltered) air directly into your unit, or a supply duct pumping conditioned hot or cold air into the attic.

***AN ESTIMATE OF YOUR COST SAVINGS***

<b><i>Did you know lowering your monthly utility bill by:</i></b>	<b><u>\$25</u></b>	<b><u>\$50</u></b>	<b><u>\$75</u></b>	<b><u>\$100</u></b>	
<b><i>...adds up to some</i></b>	<b><i>1 Year:</i></b>	<b>\$ 300</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>1,200</b>
<b><u>SERIOUS MONEY!</u></b>	<b><u>5 Years:</u></b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>6,000</b>
	<b><u>10 Years:</u></b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>

## **THE SILENT KILLER: IT’S INVISIBLE, HAS NO SMELL... AND CAN KILL YOU!**

By Frank Pirrone, Pirrones Heating & Cooling

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that up to 15, 000 people each year are examined or treated in hospitals for non-fired related CO poisoning and results in more than 2000 deaths in the U.S. every year. Breathing low concentrations of CO (carbon monoxide) may not result in obvious symptoms of poisoning but can still adversely affect you and you family’s health. At high concentrations CO poisoning is easy to overlook because the symptoms vary and may come and go if levels change quickly.



Because CO is odorless, has no color or taste and can’t be seen it can build up to dangerous, undetected levels in your home. Over long periods of time, breathing even low levels of CO can cause illness.

Know the symptoms of CO poisoning. At moderate levels, you or your family can get severe headaches, become dizzy, mentally confused, nauseated, or faint. You can even die if these levels persist for a long time. Low levels can cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches, and may have longer term effects on your health. Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, you may not think that CO poisoning could be the cause

Do your symptoms occur only in the house? Do they disappear or decrease when you leave home and reappear when you return? Is anyone else in your home complaining of similar symptoms? Did everyone’s symptoms appear about the same time? Are you using any fuel-burning appliances in the home? Has anyone inspected your appliances lately? Are you certain they are working properly?

Have your fuel-burning appliances -- including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves -- inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that the flues and chimneys are connected, in good condition, and not blocked.

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**Pirrones Heating and Air Conditioning** is based in Fredericksburg and specializes in all types of residential and commercial Heating and Air Conditioning systems and indoor air quality. For additional information on the hazards of carbon monoxide, and questions about your heating and cooling system call:

**(540) 891-1670 or 1-866 FURNACE**  
Or at: **WWW.PIRRONES.NET**

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### **“ANNOUNCEMENT”      A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR HOMEOWNERS!**

**HOMEPROFILED** has been commissioned to do a regional study of the residential home building industry.

**This study is FULLY FUNDED BY OTHERS ...there are NO FEES TO PARTICIPATE!**

The focus of this study will be to compare recently built NEWER HOMES to OLDER HOMES and will run approximately one year!.

**Our task is to:**

- “Analyze the current state of the home building industry and the affects of trends in residential building construction technology over the last 30 years by comparing the condition of recently built NEWER HOMES to OLDER, EXISTING HOMES.”

**The study requires HOMEPROFILED to:**

- Audit/evaluate the current condition of homes like yours. The audit/evaluations are an important “first phase” in the study! Direct contact with willing participating home owners is essential. Site visits are the most effective and accurate method of gathering survey data. Our goal is to audit/evaluate as many homes as possible over the study period.

**Study participants will receive a follow-up summary report from HOMEPROFILED, llc within 30 days of the site visit.**

**What we do is:**

- Schedule an appointment when we can come to the home.
- Interview the home owner.
- Perform the audit/evaluation.
- Review our preliminary findings with you, the home owner.

*(The entire process should not take more then about one hour.)*

**Again, this study is FULLY FUNDED BY OTHERS ...there are NO FEES to participate!**

**TO LEARN MORE AND FIND OUT IF YOU QUALIFY CONTACT US AT:  
(540) 898-1199 or email us at: [INFO@HOMEPROFILED.COM](mailto:INFO@HOMEPROFILED.COM)**

**(Note: Please refer to “STUDY” in the subject line)**

**And we invite you to visit our web site to learn more about our company at: [WWW.HOMEPROFILED.COM](http://WWW.HOMEPROFILED.COM)**

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