

WATER INGRESS: NOT JUST CONDOS

Large multi-family buildings shrouded in tarps for an envelope repair have become an all-too-familiar sight. Driving by, owners of single-family homes have often comforted themselves with the thought, "I'm glad I don't have to worry about that. That's a condo problem." Many are shocked to discover that their confidence was misplaced, especially since media coverage has concentrated on the larger structures. The facts: water ingress is running up staggering repair bills on detached homes as well.

All structures, large or small, have a building envelope, an exterior shell consisting of roofs, decks, walls, windows, doors, and foundation components. Water ingress occurs when water finds a point of penetration through that envelope. Bruce Pomeroy of PCM Pomeroy Construction and Maintenance points to varied sources: rain hitting and running down the surface of a building, standing water on roofs or decks, foundation seepage, and even moisture wicking up from ground sources. He explains, "Once inside the building envelope, the water doesn't evaporate as air movement in modern sealed structures is insufficient. What keeps the cold out also serves to trap the moisture in."

Water ingress damage was uncommon in older buildings, particularly single-family structures, as their structure allowed air to move much more freely (remember the drafty kitchen window or the cold coming in around the door in your parents' house). Water that penetrated the exterior shell could escape or dry.

Over the last 25 years, however, home-building methods have changed. Flat roofs and reduced overhangs have maximized building footprints, but resulted in greater areas of exposed wall and increased vulnerability of wall, window, and door components to the weather. Advances in technology to seal the building, insulate it and curtail air movement have netted gains in energy efficiency, but have made it impossible for moisture to dry once inside the structure.

Condo or detached home, the results are the same. Affected building materials rot and deteriorate over time, always a concern, but particularly so if structural components like joists and beams are compromised. Warm, damp environments are ideal for the growth of mould and fungus. Many species are toxic, and the airborne spores are known cause respiratory illnesses as well as to aggravate existing conditions such as asthma and allergies.

By the time problems become obvious on the interior surfaces of the house, the hidden damage can be extensive. In his experience, Bruce Pomeroy has found average repair costs reaching \$150,000, with many homes far exceeding that. "The tragedy," he says, "is that it so unnecessary. A modest annual investment of time and money in maintenance can prevent most of these problems, or catch them in the early stages when repair is simpler and much less costly."

PCM Pomeroy Construction and Maintenance has been working with individual homeowners for years. Now, to assist homeowners with prevention and early detection, PCM has implemented a structured inspection and maintenance service. Three site visits per year provide the much needed attention and expertise: detailed inspection of vulnerable areas, cleaning of drains and gutters, and timely attention to problems as they arise. The resulting peace of mind extends beyond the current owner to any prospective buyer, assured that a comprehensive and documented program has been followed, backed by PCM's exclusive warranty.

"There is a difference," Bruce Pomeroy points out, "between a home that needs repair and a home that is already in a maintainable state." Repairs are often needed before maintenance is possible. One thing is certain, existing problems don't fix themselves or get better over time. Learn more about protecting your most valuable asset at

WWW.POMEROYCONSTRUCTION.COM



PCM POMEROY
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE

604 294 6700