

Home Buyer Guide

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In most cases, when you go to purchase a home, most people choose to have it inspected. In many states, inspectors cannot comment on anything that the state has not provided them specific training for. In most cases, inspectors are not given wildlife training, only pest control training. Because of this evil loop hole with inspections and people not being honest enough on their disclosure statements (the line that says "is there anything else you have had a problem with in this house that you have or have not remedied?"), buyers often buy brand new or older homes with existing or unprofessionally "fixed" wildlife issues which were covered up to sell the house.

If you are selling your building and want to temporarily cover up a problem so the buyer does not find out about your problem, please call another company. It is heartbreaking for us to see so many of our clients be taken advantage of in this manner, and we prefer to concentrate our efforts on assisting more integrity-filled clients. This is why you will often hear us ask, "Do you plan on selling your home soon?"

Pre-Purchase Inspections of Homes and Businesses for Wildlife

We find that 40% of all new and old home purchases have or recently had wildlife problems and upon investigation, 70% of those homes have physical proof that the previous owner(s) or builder attempted to remedy the problem with inadequate, obvious physical repairs. Buyers, beware when you have your house inspected, it has nothing to do with wildlife. We have had quite a few clients who bought a home only to find out afterward that it had wildlife issues, they always ask us "I wonder why this happened? I had my home inspected."

Are Certain Home Styles More Susceptible to Wildlife and Pest Control Issues?

1990 or Newer with Brick Siding

The number one style of home that we work on is homes built from 1990 to brand new homes just being moved into with brick siding and an attached garage in a new neighborhood or area where trees or fields were cleared to make room for homes.

1970 -1990 with Brick Siding

The number two style of home has the exact same description as the above, but was built between 1970 and 1990. The most common problems we experience with these homes are not only insects but mice, snakes moving into the walls and attics to eat the mice, birds in the attic, woodpeckers and flickers, snakes wanting to eat the birds, armadillos destroying the lawn, and raccoons in the attic. It is also not uncommon, in certain geographic locations, to have a newly built home with hundreds of bats in the attic.

In newly constructed neighborhoods, most builders will completely clear cut and remove all or most trees and plant select smaller trees. Because of this there is not as much habitat for the birds, squirrels and raccoons which were displaced; therefore, the new homes become their home.

Newer neighborhoods typically take approximately between four and seven years to get squirrels because of the lack of trees. Problems in newer neighborhoods are quite predictable in each geographic area.

English Tudor Cottage Style

Third most common style of home that we work on is generically referred to as English Tudor, otherwise known as cottage style. This particular style of home is extremely attractive to wildlife for several different reasons. Every home, (even if you do not have vines growing all over it to make it look like a tree) is just a funny looking tree to squirrels and raccoons. English Tudor homes have wood trim that commonly is painted a contrasting color and is placed over the main siding in vertical, horizontal and diagonal designs. If you take a look at that house from a squirrels point of view, that wood trim, even if it is all painted the same color as the rest of the house, the wood trim looks like branches. Having tree branches within twenty feet of the house will only amplify this image in a squirrels mind and provide them a ladder to the top of your most expensive investment.

Mobile Homes, Trailers, Manufactured Homes and Wildlife

Our hearts sink anytime we get calls about wildlife and pest control issues in manufactured homes. These are often times referred to as trailers and mobile homes. If these structures do not have rock, brick or concrete foundations and skirting all the way around, they are very difficult to wildlife proof. We can wildlife proof a mobile home but it tends to be an economical problem in that most people residing in a mobile home as their full time home cannot afford the three to five thousand dollars it takes to even start the process of making it so skunks and other animals cannot dig under the trailer skirting. Many businesses utilize mobile units as an office; we have a lot of experience repairing mobile units because of these commercial uses. Trailers do not typically have normal walls, ceilings or even the same building materials as a regular residential property. Therefore, making it more challenging to cut out and remove dead animals from thin walls and nonexistent attics.

The most common animals that invade trailers are skunks, cats, raccoons, opossum, ground hogs, chipmunks, snakes, and foxes. Due to the economic nature of most of these homes, all we can do in most cases is repeatedly trap and relocate the uninvited guests from under the skirting, cut the membrane plastic seal on the mobile to remove babies and dead animals and treat for smells.

Crawl Spaces Versus Concrete Slabs And Basements

Wildlife and pest problems in crawl spaces are very common. Typically the offending animal, insect or spider enters through crawl space doors, crawl space vents and in some cases via digging under a shallow foundation wall. A home where the foundation was created by simply placing concrete blocks on the ground or on top of a few inches of concrete allows animals such as ground hogs, skunks, raccoons, and foxes to easily call the crawl space home. Homes without gutters will expedite

foundation erosion allowing easier entry to the crawl space. Crawl spaces do provide unique advantages when taking care of wildlife and pest control problems.

Concrete Slabs and Wildlife

If a house has a concrete slab and an animal burrows under the concrete slab and dies, removing the smelly mess mandates removing a massive amount of soil or cutting through the concrete to remove the carcass and soil and then pouring new concrete. Homeowners utilizing the famous do-it-yourself garden hose method with animals under a concrete slab often times drown the intruder under their house forcing concrete work. Crawl spaces allow access to heating and air conditioning duct work where as concrete slabs often rust ducts. Crawl spaces also allow wildlife access to duct work. Crawl spaces allow easy access to provide comprehensive pest control. If a concrete slab is not properly sealed around plumbing and electrical lines built into it, it will eventually allow spiders, insects, termites, snakes, chipmunks, skunks, moles and gophers access to the living quarters. If you have ever remodeled a bathroom with a concrete slab and removed the bathtub only to find the entire underside packed solid with dirt, it is because of improper slab sealing around plumbing pipes.

If animals are digging under a concrete slab, we can fix it with long term results using a drive in barrier called Dig Defence Animal Control Commercial Grade and replacing the eroded soil and preventing it from happening again by installing gutters or French drains. If animals are accessing a crawl space via digging under, the same product can be used. If wildlife is accessing via the crawl space door or crawl space vents, we can replace them with wildlife proof versions.

Basements and Wildlife

Homes that were built into the side of a hill, such as those commonly found in the Grand Lake area, can provide wildlife and pest control problems adequate for horror movies and have been some of the more difficult projects we have encountered. Walk in basements and boat houses under homes built into a hill side can and often do allow animals such as skunks into the ceilings. Skunks do not climb very well, which is a good thing, because skunks in the ceilings and walls and living quarters of homes can turn into a very smelly situation fast. Receiving a call from a client with an animal stuck in an interior wall, cutting a hole in it to remove the animal on the second floor and finding a skunk staring at you can increase your pulse just a tad. A-frame style homes with the roof touching the ground can allow skunks, chipmunks, ground hogs, and foxes into the attic, which is typically not at all typical. Partial basements where half the area is a crawl space and half is a full stand up basement provide a lot of excitement for us and the animals involved when they realize they cannot get back into the crawl space are to exit the house. This is when we are called to trap or manually remove animals stranded in basements. Dirt floor basements with ground hogs, skunks, chipmunks and foxes is the last place you should ever think about using poisons to get rid of the intruding wildlife. Dirt floor basements mandate proper wildlife exclusion repairs to prevent smelly nightmares.

Composition Roofs, Cedar Roofs, Metal Roofs, Flat Roofs, Composite Tiles, Slate Roofs, Spanish Tile Roofs and Wildlife

Hands down, the best roof to have when it comes to keeping wildlife and pests out of your home, is a composition roof. This is sometimes referred to as an asphalt shingle roof. The Cadillac version of this roof is called a thirty year or fifty year tab composition shingle. These styles are simply thicker and longer lasting. Composition roofs are less expensive when it comes to labor and materials to repair and wildlife/pest proof than any other style of roof.

Cedar Roofs and Wildlife

The only thing worse than a cedar roof is a house or commercial building that used to have a cedar roof on it and was replaced by a composition roof. This is because when you remove a regular or jumbo cedar shake roof, even when you add thick decking under a thick fifty year tab composition roof, it does not equal the depth of the cedar shake roof. Because of this, all of your trim on the house will not typically touch or match up with the top of your composition roof. Your house was initially designed for a cedar roof, and in most cases will always have much larger gaps allowing wildlife, spiders, wasps and other insects to freely enter the attic. We repair these roof construction gaps every day. Construction gaps exist on every style of roof but the worst ones can be found on cedar and Spanish tile roofs.

Composition Roofs and Wildlife

The worst problem we experience with composition roofs is due to the fact that things in motion tend to stay in motion, things that rest tend to stay at rest, and therefore, humans including roofers can become lazy. A roofer has one job- to water proof your home. So, when installing new decking to go under a composition roof and the decking does not meet flush and touch the fascia, ninety percent of all roofers will cover up this gap and call it good. squirrels, raccoons, flying squirrels, mice, snakes, opossums and bats call it good too because they can feel the air flow left by the gap which will allow them easy attic access with minimal or no effort. Sometimes this "lazy roofer gap" is large enough to shove your arm into and other times one quarter of an inch. Both of which can give pests an upper hand and advantage. Depending on the size of this gap in the roof, we sometimes can simply secure the area with a dab of silicone but sometimes it mandates getting out a professional metal break and doing custom metal work all the way around the roof edge which sometimes mandates removing the gutters first.

Metal Roofs and Wildlife

Metal roofs are long lasting investments that eliminate a lot of problems that other roof styles have. The two basic metal roof styles are the corrugated (the wavy looking style) and the standing seam metal roof. The wavy corrugations are perfect places for bats, snakes, wasps and other pests to enter. These voids are easily sealed with a lot of tedious and time consuming labor and a lot of materials. Utilizing the manufacturers preformed foam inserts for the corrugation gaps may be a short term solution to keep pests out of the attic but rest assured it does nothing to keep pests out, it just looks good. Standing seam metal roofs are more common with commercial buildings and are typically more expensive. All metal buildings have unique features built into them that must be addressed in order to keep wildlife and insects out; especially around gutters.

Slate and Spanish Tile Roofs and Wildlife

Slate and Spanish tile roofs tend to be a status symbol for people and wildlife. The roof construction gaps and voids which allow entry into attics on these roofs can be large enough to stick your head into. Most Wildlife Management Professionals do not care to do exclusion repairs on a metal roof and certainly not on slate or Spanish tile roofs. We tend to specialize in wildlife proofing slate and Spanish tile and have all of the materials and tools to accomplish these roofing missions.

Flat Roofs and Wildlife

Flat roofs, residential or commercial, have many different styles and each one mandates thinking outside the box to keep bats, raccoons, snakes and other uninvited guests out of the attic and walls. Metal drip caps, parapet walls, rubber/tar/gravel bases, roof top heating and air conditioning vents and other flat roof dilemmas all mandate extreme attention to detail and knowledge of construction. Flat roofs also typically mandate not being terrified of heights. We have no problem in any of these arenas and love doing flat roof wildlife exclusions.

Composite, Concrete Tile or Shake Roofs and Wildlife

Composite shake roofs and composite tiles or concrete tile roofs are somewhat new on the market and have their own unique challenges similar to Spanish tile roofs. The large gaps and repairs mandated are much easier in many cases because these composites are not as fragile as slate and Spanish tile.

Power Roof Vents, Roof Vents, Attic Screens and Wildlife

If your home does not have adequately protected and wildlife proof attic roof vents, we can alter them to keep wildlife out, which often costs less than installing new vents.

Lamanco 750 Wildlife Proof Attic Roof Vents

When we assist clients with designing their new home or roof in the blueprint phase, we specify the style of attic ventilation in order to save clients problems and money down the road. We prefer that our clients use ridge vent and/or a style of roof vent commonly referred to as a "slant back" made by a company called Lamanco with a model number of 750. These are the most wildlife proof style of vents on the market.

Electric Powered and Solar Powered Attic Roof Vents

Electric powered and solar powered attic roof vents with fans to suck heat out of the attic are wildlife magnets. They typically have a thin metal screen or plastic screen which is easily compromised by animals, bats and insects. Smaller birds, squirrels, raccoons, opossums and snakes have softer bodies than adults, so when they enter the attic when the fan is off and they try to exit with the fan on the result is a bloody mess of animal parts evenly distributed throughout the entire attic. Larger birds and

adult animals have the tendency to have the fan blades hit them, hold them in place until they die and cause the motor of the fan to overheat and sometimes start a small fire if it does not pop the breaker. Although heat rises and this style of vent removes hot air, it is questionable if the electric usage pays for itself in energy efficiency and the risk it places animals and building owners in. Although we put wildlife proof covers on this powered attic vent style every week, any employee of ours who has seen the problems these vents create would never choose to have one on their own home.

Attic Screen Vents

Another popular style of attic ventilation is a triangular, round or rectangular screened attic vent placed on the siding of the house towards the peak of the roof. Heat does not go left and right, it goes up. Therefore, for this style of attic ventilation to work, it must have at least a small breeze. Not only is this not the most efficient way to cool an attic, it allows snow and animals an easy access point to the attic. The metal or wood louvers over the screen are designed to keep the elements out but they provide perfect shelter for birds and bats. The wildlife control industry standard in the past has always been replacing the attic screen on the interior of the house but we feel as though placing the screen on the exterior of this style of attic vent will eliminate attic problems on that structure for the rest of its life.