



# Home Tips®



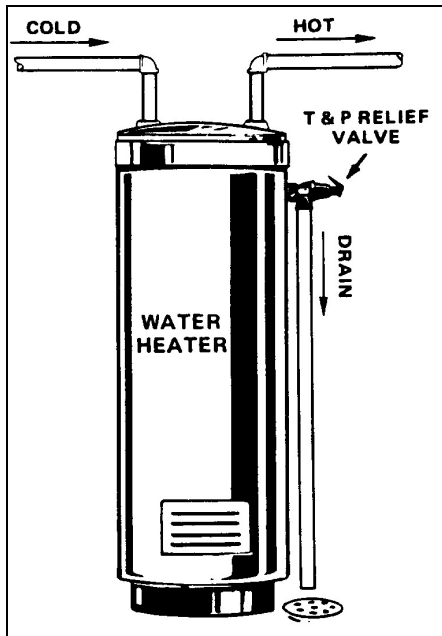
• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 1003 STAR COURT, NORCROSS, GEORGIA 30093, (770) 925-8518 • APRIL 1995 •

## Q & A

### What Is A T&P Valve?

*We recently had our house inspected and the inspector said the water heater T&P valve had improper piping. The pipe went up instead of down. What is a T&P valve and why is there a problem with the pipe?*

A T&P valve is a *temperature and pressure relief valve* that is connected to your water heater as a secondary safety feature. If the internal thermostat becomes defective, the water can heat to temperatures far exceeding the normal boiling point of 212 degrees and the pressure within the tank will increase which will result in the tank exploding. A 30 gallon water heater will explode with the same force of 1 pound of dynamite which will destroy most of the house.



The T&P valve is installed on the outside of the water heater so that it can be physically tested to insure that it is working properly. Test the valve by pulling up on the test lever on the end of the valve and see if water runs out the pipe. You can normally hear the water running. If the valve is stuck, then it is defective and it should be replaced immediately.

The pipe connected to the valve is called the discharge piping. This pipe directs the water to a floor drain or to the exterior of the house where no one will be injured by the hot water, if the valve opens. This discharge pipe must be the same size as the valve, usually 3/4", be pitched down for a natural drain or if the piping runs upward towards the ceiling, it must have a way to drain the water out of the line after testing. The pipe must not have any obstruction such as water in the pipe. Be sure to test the valve once a year.

### Sealing A Cedar Deck?

*We recently built a new cedar deck and are getting conflicting advice on whether or not to seal the wood.*

This is a question I am asked a lot when I go on inspections. According to Bruce Johnson of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Products Research Laboratory, while cedar is naturally decay-resistant, it will eventually rot like any other wood. Treating your cedar deck will greatly prolong its life, provided you do it correctly. Bruce suggest the following:

Use a waterproof wood preservative that has a fungicide and mildewcide. Check the label.

Treating the deck only once is a waste of money. You will need to reapply the preservative from time to time - every one to two years in most areas of the country. It's time to reapply the preservative when your deck begins to look dry and rainwater just soaks into the wood instead of beading on the surface.

Cedar will weather to a silvery gray color. If you want this color, wait until the wood has weathered and apply a clear preservative. If you want a color other than silver gray, use a tinted wood stain before applying the preservative. Unfortunately, no one has come up with a way to keep cedar looking like it just came from the mill. All preservatives, even the clear ones, will darken the wood when they're applied.

How do you apply the preservatives (brush, roll, or spray) is a matter of personal preference. I find it is easiest to apply the preservative with a standard garden sprayer. But you need to treat the entire surface of the wood, top, sides and bottom. Apply just enough preservative to soak the wood. The preservative shouldn't run down or puddle on the surface.

Also, don't forget that the ends of the boards (the end grain) need to be treated. This is where most of the moisture enters the wood.

### It's That Time Of Year Again...

The spring represents the time of year again for certain maintenance to be performed on your home. One of the most common problems is the chimney. First, start on top of the roof and look at the chimney cap. Make sure there is no deterioration of the cap and that the area is water tight. Look at the wood or brick on the chimney for loose brick, missing mortar or decaying wood. Next, remove the flue cap and look down the flue. Make sure there are no restrictions such as bird or squirrel nests present. If the flue pipe is dirty, now is the time to have the pipe cleaned. It is recommended that a

