CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS INCORPORATED ®

Home Tips®

• CHRISTIAN BUILDING INSPECTORS, INC., 1003 STAR COURT, NORCROSS, GEORGIA 30093, (770) 925-8518 • DECEMBER 1993 •

Q & A

Mineral Deposits On Fixtures?

The shower faucets and aluminum frame on our shower door are stained and have mineral deposits on them. How can I clean them?

You can use a commercial cleaning product designed to remove water and mineral stains, such as "Lime-Away" or "Barkeepers Friend". They're found at most grocery and hardware stores. Or try a paste made of Borax powder mixed with lemon juice. Test in a small area first.

For day-to-day cleaning, use glass cleaner or half-and-half mixture of vinegar and water, because anything stronger can tarnish the finish. After you have cleaned, rinse well and dry. Then apply lemon oil with a soft cloth to the metallic surfaces to help cut down on future spotting and staining. Wiping the fixtures and shower enclosure dry after each use will also cut down on mineral buildup.

Flickering Lights?

Every time we start our dishwasher it makes the lights flicker momentarily on two upstairs circuits. What causes this and how can it be fixed? Does it have to do with aluminum wiring?

What you are seeing is a voltage drop in your electrical system. There are three possible causes for those momentary flickers:

1. The wire bringing power into your house may not be big enough. Older houses had only 30 or 60 amp capacity electrical service. Usually these have been upgraded to 100 amp service. Voltage drops can occur if the lower-amp service was upgraded by just installing a larger fuse box or circuit breaker panel without at the same time increasing the size of the wire coming into the house.
2. The dishwasher is on the same circuit with the lights, and the circuit is not large enough for all of them. When the dishwasher motor kicks on, a momentary power drain dims the lights. According to the National Electrical Code, the dishwasher should be on its own circuit without any additional lights or outlets.
3. A loose or improper connection. This is possible with any type of wiring, but much more likely with aluminum wiring. A loose or improper connection increases the resistance of the wiring, which leads to voltage drops. Aluminum wire was used in the '60s and '70s as a cheaper substitute for copper wire, but connections are more difficult to make than with copper wires. If they aren't properly made, aluminum wires can come loose and electrical arcing - or even a fire - can occur.

If you are having a problem with voltage drops, we recommend that you have your wiring, aluminum or copper, inspected by a licensed electrician. It should cost less than $100. In the case of aluminum wires, hire someone with aluminum wiring experience. Not all electricians are qualified. For a list of electricians who are qualified to work on aluminum wiring, contact AMP Special Industries, Dept. TFH, P.O. Box 1776, Southwestern, PA 19899; (215) 647-1000.

Are Asphalt Sealers Worth It?

I am a first-time owner of an asphalt driveway. I'm not sure what I need to do to maintain the driveway. I see that some of my neighbors seal their driveways every year. Why does this unpleasant job have to be done?

The main reason to seal your asphalt driveway is to keep it looking good. Many people like their driveways to look clean, black and new, and a seal coat is a relatively inexpensive way to get that (though it's certainly a smelly and messy way!).

Sealing your driveway will also prevent minor surface damage. It keeps the ultraviolet rays, gasoline and oil from damaging the surface of the asphalt, and it helps prevent water from getting into little cracks and breaking up the asphalt in cold weather. These surface problems would otherwise require patching.

You can seal a driveway for around 5 cents a square foot if you buy the sealer yourself at a home center. You can hire a contractor to do the job for around 10 cents a square foot with a minimum charge of around $200.00. Look in the Yellow Pages under Asphalt & Asphalt Products for someone who does sealing.

However, don't seal every year. If too much sealer builds up, it will flake and peel off. Seal your driveway every three to four years or as the sealer wears off.

A residential asphalt driveway has an average life of around 20 years, whether you seal it or not. The best thing you can do to make your driveway last longer is not sealing it, but making sure that garbage trucks and other heavy vehicles stay off it, especially in the spring when the ground is soft, or in the hot weather when the asphalt is hot and soft, and can be crushed under a heavy load.

Christmas Lighting Problems?

Christmas is the time of year when we pull out lights and all types of decorations to celebrate the season. It is also the time of year that we have many fires associated with Christmas trees and lighting. Here is a tip from us to you.

When you decorate the tree with lights and decorations be sure the main extension cord you use is large enough to carry the load. Do not plug four or five light cords into an extension cord that is the same or smaller size because you will overload the capacity of the cord. Always try to use a larger size or gage cord. If you're not sure if it is adequate, just touch the cord after it has been in use for 20 to 30 minutes and feel if the cord is warm or hot to the touch. If it is, then you will need to replace it with a larger gage extension cord. The undersized wire could heat up enough to melt the insulation and cause a fire.

We hope each and every one of you have a very safe and enjoyable holiday season.

Q&A Source: Handyman Magazine.

If you have a question, comment or home tip, send your letter to Home Tips, Christian Building Inspectors, Inc., 1003 Star Court, Norcross, Georgia 30093. We reserve the right to edit for length.

Thought For The Season

CHRISTMAS BEGAN IN THE HEART OF GOD. IT IS COMPLETE ONLY WHEN IT REACHES THE HEART OF MAN.

A Tip Of The Hat To:

All The Realtors That Referred Us In 1993

Thank You

Happy Hanukkah

Season's Greetings

Merry Christmas

From

Rod, Lea Ann & Larry

Jesus is the reason for the season.

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• **For Additional Information, Contact Rod Harrison or Lea Ann Giddens 925-8518** •

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