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# House-Pro Inspections™

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Realtor Monthly Newsletter

November 2004

## HOAs

Home Owners Associations (HOAs) are a fact of life for many communities and condos. About one in six Americans lives in an association-managed community, according to the Community Association Institute (CAI). And 4 out of 5 houses built since 1995 are governed by HOAs. This means more and more buyers will be purchasing homes in an HOA-community.

Some home buyers are concerned about purchasing a home with an associated HOA. HOAs do have tremendous power and, if run by the wrong people, can cause difficulties for homeowners in the HOA. But HOAs also are of great benefit in maintaining a consistent look and feel throughout a community, and taking care of nuisance issues that the individual homeowner won't have to handle themselves.

HOA fees usually start around \$100 and increase from there depending upon services provided. The HOA is run by an elected board of directors. This board creates regulations on everything from parking and lawn maintenance to color of your front door and shutters. Thus, home buyers should pay particular focus to which owners in their community are elected onto the board, as

Link: <http://www.ahahome.com>

this board makes significant decisions about their community.

A list of a few things HOAs cover:

- fences and hedges
- swingsets and basketball hoops
- garages and sheds
- mailboxes
- clotheslines and garbage cans
- outdoor lights and TV antennas
- window coverings and wreaths
- home businesses
- pets (size or even acceptability)
- noises and obstructions of views

There are a few ways of avoiding problems with HOAs:

- Fully read and understand the covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) before you sign the contract
- Once you belong to the HOA, attend the meetings and voice your opinion
- Do NOT withhold dues out of protest (most HOAs have the authority to foreclose on your house)
- If issues arise, try to work them out amicably

**CONTACT KEVIN TEITEL AT HOUSE-PRO INSPECTIONS TODAY!**  
**Convenient times available including Evenings & Weekends.**  
**(703) 721-0323 or [kevin@houseproinspections.net](mailto:kevin@houseproinspections.net)**

## Fall Maintenance

Fall is upon us and now is the time to start preparing your house for winter. With energy prices sky-rocketing, making your house more energy-efficient will help you achieve significant savings on your bills. The following list provides a variety of maintenance items to check each fall, to help ensure that your home is up-to-par for winter weather. For an actual energy audit of your home, go to <http://www.homeenergysaver.lbl.gov/> for more information.

- Have chimney cleaned and inspected
- Inspect roof and flashing
- Check attic to confirm there is adequate insulation (recommended R-49)
- Make sure attic has enough ventilation (1.5 in per sq. ft. of attic floor space)
- Check caulking on windows and doors,
- Install storm windows (if applicable)
- Install weather stripping
- Inspect exterior walls for cracks or deterioration
- Clean and repair gutters
- Insulate basements and crawlspaces
- Insulate water pipes
- Winterize outdoor plumbing (hose faucets)
- Check basement foundation and windows for deterioration
- Seal driveways
- Get a check-up & cleaning of hot water heater, furnace and other heat-related appliances (such as gas logs)
- Clean/dust vents , baseboard heaters and cold-air returns
- Clean/replace furnace filter
- Install digital set-back thermostat
- Pressure-clean and treat/winterize decks
- Check smoke alarms and batteries
- Check (or install if not present) carbon dioxide detector
- Clean and reverse ceiling fans (to send air up for heat versus down for air conditioning)
- Clean and lubricate garage door hinges, rollers, and tracks; tighten screws
- Winterize pool/sprinkler system

### Links:

- <http://www.homeenergysaver.lbl.gov/>
- [http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/html/seasonals/fall\\_fixup.html](http://www.thisoldhouse.com/toh/html/seasonals/fall_fixup.html)
- <http://www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html>

House-Pro Inspections performs contingency, pre-listing, warranty, new construction, remodeling and information-only inspections. For more information, please visit <http://www.houseproinspections.net> or call Kevin Teitel at (703) 721-0323.

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